Francis Blackburne

ARCHDEACON of CLEVELAND.

THE

WORKS,

THEOLOGICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS,

Including some pieces, not before printed,

OF

FRANCIS BLACKBURNE, M.A.

LATE RECTOR OF RICHMOND,

AND ARCHDEACON OF CLEVELAND;

With some account

OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF THE AUTHOR, BY HIMSELF,

COMPLETED BY HIS SON

FRANCIS BLACKBURNE, L.L.B.

And illustrated by an Appendix of Original Papers.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LIBERABIT VERITAS

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1804.

TO

CHRISTOPHER WYVILL,

THE

DISINTERESTED AND INTREPID ASSERTOR

OF

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,

THE ZEALOUS ADVOCATE OF

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMATION IN THE STATE;

THIS EDITION OF THE WORKS OF HIS FRIEND

FRANCIS BLACKBURNE,

THE INDEPENDENT, AND INDEFATIGABLE PROMOTER OF THE PRINCIPLES OF PROTESTANTISM IN THE CHURCH,

IS INSCRIBED

WITH AFFECTION AND RESPECT,

BY THE

EDITOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS publication of the works of the Author of The Confessional, *is submitted to the public by the Editor, from a strong sense of the duty which he owes to his country, to recommend those principles of genuine protestantism, on which a moderate reform of the established church might most happily be effected; as well as from an affectionate regard to the memory of his excellent and revered parent, whose character and views as a writer, have often been misunderstood or misrepresented; and whose long and laborious life, was dedicated to the promotion of the best interests of the church of England.*

It was the great wish of Archdeacon Blackburne's heart, by earnestly appealing to those who are intrusted with the superintendance of ecclesiastical affairs, to remove certain restraints on the exercise of christian liberty, which had been imposed in an inauspicious hour, by the leaders of the protestant reformation; and to exhibit the national establishment of the gospel improving in edification and purity, as

the sentiments and knowledge of the age were advancing in every other desirable attainment.

A design like this was worthy of such a man;—a man whose information in the laws of his country, whose researches in ecclesiastical polity, whose thorough acquaintance with the scriptures, and rooted conviction of the truth of the religion revealed in them, at once inspired him with zeal to pursue the prospect of reform in the church, and enabled him to discern, by what means and to what extent, such a reform might be carried without endangering the peace and good order of civil society.

Whenever opportunity offered to serve the cause of truth and liberty, however temporary the occasion might be, Mr. Blackburne was always on the watch, and his pen ever ready to volunteer its services; one consequence of which was, that many of the controversial Essays of this 'faithful monitor' were scattered through the periodical publications of the day. And, however we may trust, that neither these nor the efforts of his fellow-labourers, were wholly lost at that time, yet it would be no easy task at present, amongst many others of the like nature, to ascertain the contributions of our author; nor if they could be distinctly ascertained, would

it be thought worth the while, perhaps, to reprint them now in a collected form.

It may be sufficient to acquaint the reader, who is curious in controversial history, that in the year 1774, *Mr. Blackburne published in three small volumes,* 12mo. A Collection of Letters and Essays, in favour of public liberty; first published in the news-papers, in the years 1764, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, and 1770. By an amicable band of well-wishers, to the religious and civil rights of mankind. Published by Wilkie, and Goldsmith, London.

'*Of Mr. Blackburne's vigilance and activity,* 'whenever the enemy appeared, the reader per-'haps may form some idea, by perusing the pa-'per on Imbutation; *those signed,* Phlebotomus, Saxifragus, Lothario, Apicius, Ecclesiasticus, Camillus, Inceptor, *the* Answer *of* 'the *Archbishop of* Paris, *to the Archbishop of* 'Canterbury, *the letter to the bishop of Albany* 'elect, *and not less than twice as many more.* 'By *the same hand was manufactured,* the cas-'trated chapter of Tristram Shandy.' *And to the same hand, we believe, we may safely attribute the papers signed,* Plebeius, Misomumpsimus, a Free Burgess in fetters, the Country Curate of January the first, Æcus, Iconoclastes, Parrhasius, *as well as several others,*

on which, however, we cannot pronounce with equal certainty.

In the following Memoirs of Mr. Blackburne's life and writings, notice is taken of some printed, and some manuscript tracts of his, which do not appear in this collection of his works. The Discourse on Family religion, *and such of the* Sermons *and* Charges, *as are not here inserted, being chiefly of a practical cast, may be supposed to have better answered the particular purpose, for which they were originally composed, as they were at that time printed and published, than they could do if included in a voluminous publication like the present. For the rest, the* Defence of Dr. Law's Appendix against Morton, Steffe, and Fleming, *is in a great measure superseded by the last complete edition of the* Historical View; *which, in the opinion of some competent judges, may be considered as having given the finishing blow to the controversy. Of the* Letter on Baptism, *and of the* Three Letters on Swift's *(misnamed)* History of the four last years of the Queen, *a short account will be found in the proper place.*

Upon the whole, the Editor thinks it right and respectful to the public, to add, that he has conducted this edition of the works of his father, on as extensive a plan, as a reasonable regard

to the expence of so large a publication, and a proper attention to the convenience of the purchaser would permit. He hopes, however, that he has excluded nothing, which could contribute fully and fairly, to display the character and principles of the Author. And for the insertion, on his own accord, of the two little pieces, now first printed, the Story of the two Jews, *and* the Catacombs, *it is presumed, they will be read with pleasure, as specimens of the writer's talent in the province of invention and fancy.*

The following Epigram of Archdeacon Blackburne's, which is already well known, and has been repeatedly printed, for want of a more appropriate place in this work, may, without farther apology, be subjoined here.

LYCIDAS to PRUDENTIA.

Descend, fair Stoic, from thy flights:
From nature learn to know,
Our passions are the needful weights,
That make our virtues go.

PRUDENTIA to LYCIDAS.

True, Lycidas: yet think not so
Another truth to shun;
Our passions make our virtues *go*,
But make our vices *run*.

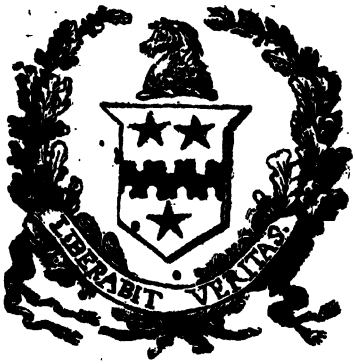
ADVERTISEMENT.

It would be unjust to conclude this Advertisement, without the acknowledgment of obligation to a learned and faithful friend, whose peculiar acquaintance with the subject of the following papers; and affectionate attachment to his memory, has enabled the Editor to meet the public eye, with more advantage than he could else have done, without the benefit of his assistance.

BRIGNALL, *April 5*, 1804.

N. B. The text of the subsequent Memoirs, as far as the latin prayer, inclusive, is all that was left by the Author himself. For the continuance of those Memoirs, for the extracts of letters and other notes, whether signed E or not, as also for those articles or remarks in the Appendix, which are not otherwise accounted for, the Editor alone is responsible.

This edition having been put to press in the year 1801, *the pieces now* first *published, appear with the date of the year in which they were printed.*



SOME ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR.

FRANCIS BLACKBURNE, the author of the following tracts, was born at Richmond, in Yorkshire, June 9, 1705. His grandfather Francis, was a younger son of a gentleman, whose family for many years were owners of Marricke Abbey, about six miles from Richmond, together with a good estate for those times, which a numerous offspring, and a want of œconomy, obliged the owner to sell, so that the fortunes of his younger children were but very inconsiderable.

Francis, our author's grandfather, was settled at Richmond, and there entered into the stocking trade, in

which, by his own prudence and industry, and the encouragement of Lady Yorke (whose relation, Mrs. Jane Inman, of Bewerley, near Ripon, he married), and of Thomas Yorke, Esq. her son, he acquired a handsome fortune, which enabled him to settle an estate of about two hundred pounds a year, upon the marriage of his only son Francis, with Alice the elder daughter of Dr. Thomas Comber, dean of Durham. Of this marriage, our author, a younger son Thomas, and a daughter Jane, afterwards married to Onesiphorus Paul, Esq. of Hill House, in Gloucestershire, [and mother to the present humane and patriotic Sir George Onesiphorus Paul, Baronet. E.] were the issue.

Francis, our author's father, died at the age of twenty-nine. And some years after, his widow married William Kirkby Esq.* of Ashlack, in Lancashire; and in consequence of that alliance, the family removed into that county, and the two sons were sent successively to school at Kendal, in Westmoreland, Pennington, and Hawkshead, (where is a Free-school, founded and endowed by Archbishop Sandys), and lastly, to the Free-school at Sedbergh, in Yorkshire, of which Dr. Samuel Saunders was then master.

* By this marriage Mr. Kirkby had one daughter and three sons;—Sarah Kirkby, who died unmarried at Kendal, Feb. 17, 1800, in her 88th year.

William Comber Kirkby, late Attorney at Law, in London, (and father of William Kirkby Esq. of the Exchequer Office), who died, July 8th, 1791, in his 76th year.

James Kirkby, late Druggist in London, who died September 5, 1790, in his 74th year.

And John Kirkby, who died in London, at the age of 22.

These frequent removals from one school to another, were the effect of the care and attention of their father in law, Mr. Kirkby, to the education of these two young men; for no sooner was any neglect or insufficiency of the school-master discovered, but the boys were removed to some other school of better repute. The benefit of this solicitude of his father in law in the education of himself and his brother, our author always acknowledged with expressions of the most sensible gratitude.

The elder brother remained only one year under the care of Dr. Saunders, having, as was judged by his friends, sufficiently compleated his classical learning, to be qualified for entering upon academical studies; but being only sixteen years of age, it was thought proper that he should pass one year under the eye of his worthy uncle Thomas Comber, Esq. of East Newton,* in Yorkshire, at which place he had the advantage of the library of his grandfather, the Dean of Durham, and of the direction of his uncle in the use of it, who had been educated at Lincoln college, in Oxford, under the tuition of Dr. Lupton.

In the month of May, 1722, and in the seventeenth year of his age, our author was admitted pensioner of Catherine Hall, Cambridge, under the tuition of Mr. Edward Hubbard, (afterwards Master of the College), and constantly resided in college, till he took the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Soon after which, his brother Thomas, who had been admitted pensioner about two years before at Christ's College, Cambridge, died at that college of the small pox, which so affected our

* Near Helmsley.

author as greatly to impair his health, and made it necessary for him to go down into Yorkshire to re-establish it. Upon returning to college, he was chosen Conduct, or Chaplain-Fellow of the society, and upon that title, was ordained deacon, by Dr. Green, bishop of Ely, March 17th, 1728.

Our author's return to college, was occasioned chiefly by his expectation of a foundation-fellowship, likely to be vacant by the preferment of Mr. Addenbroke, afterwards Dean of Lichfield: but the majority of the fellows being high royalists on the principle of hereditary right, and our author having by the conversation of some liberal minded friends, and the reading of Locke,* Hoadly, &c. acquired a strong attachment to the principles of ecclesiastical and civil liberty, he became an obnoxious candidate to the society; and having disclosed his sentiments too freely, in a public speech, on the 5th of November, immediately preceding the time of taking his degree, he was rejected, though otherwise the only qualified candidate, and though the electors were obliged, in order to disappoint him, to violate their statutes, by indulging Mr. Addenbroke with

* 'A certain perſon indeed owes his principles to a very accidental word of advice given him at ſeventeen, by a worthy old lay gentleman, who ſaid, "young man, let the firſt book thou readeſt at Cambridge, be Locke upon government." It was accordingly the firſt book that perſon bought, and he improved ſo much by it, that he loſt a fellowſhip by a ſpeech on the 5th of November; and having bread to eat, by the care and induſtry of a grandfather, would be the moſt inexcuſeable man upon earth, ſhould he ever regret that and ſome other loſſes of the ſame ſort.'

F. B. To Thomas Hollis, Eſq. Feb. 14th, 1768.

an extraordinary year of grace, to keep the fellowship full.

On this disappointment our author resigned his conductship, and repaired to East-Newton to his worthy uncle Comber, with whom he continued as a boarder for some years in expectation of some church preferment, particularly the living of Richmond his native place, where the Rev. and worthy Mr. Thomas Brooke, who had married his mother's sister, was then incumbent.

During his residence at East-Newton, he was afflicted with a nervous disorder and a dejection of spirits, which disabled him from pursuing his studies, and obliged him to seek relief in strong exercise, particularly fox-hunting and other field sports, which restored him to a tolerable state of health, and power of application to books.*

* 'Fox hunting was then my study and employment, which I pursued at a relation's house in the country, when absent from York, with great solicitude and assiduity. At that relation's house however, I found some old books formerly the property of my great grandfather, (an Oliverian justice) who at the restoration saved himself, his family and fortune, by a match with a female royalist of distinction, whose name you saw in Catterick church. These books, which, after my said ancestor's demise, were thrown by among the lumber of the house, I conveyed to my lodging room, and there became acquainted with the manners and principles of many excellent old puritans, and there laid the foundation of whatever approaches towards mediocrity in my own. I was struck with their unaffected and disinterested piety, and their zeal for the spiritual good of mankind; and from them I learned that a christian truly such, must ever be in a state of warfare with the world, and particularly the principalities and powers of it. It was their piety which carried them through their trials, and their nonconformity to the

During his connection with his fellow-sportsmen, he was necessarily engaged in parties of dissipation, both in the country and at the city of York, carefully avoiding however, all temptations to intemperance, bearing in mind the occasion of his father's immature death, a gross habit of body brought on by the excesses of the bottle.

At the head of these parties was Edward Thompson, of Marston Esq. Member of Parliament for the city of York, whose brilliancy of wit and humourous vivacity, made him the delight of every company, who had the pleasure of associating with him. Our author hath often acknowledged, that to these relaxations he owed a knowledge of men and manners, highly serviceable on many occurrences of life, and such as it is impossible to learn from books.

It was during this interval, that an incident happened which he sometimes mentioned with pleasantry, in bantering his own early ambition of being an author. While he was under-graduate, a sermon was preached on the thirtieth of January at the University church of Cambridge, on Mat. xxii. 21st. *Render to Cæsar*, &c. This sermon was printed, and provoked our au-

' luxury and dissipation of the age, as well as to the forms of the eſtab-
' liſhment, that made them more than conquerors.'

F. B. to the Rev. Mr. Turner, Wakefield, Vide Monthly Mag. p. 888, Dec. 1796.

N. B. The *Oliverian Juſtice*, mentioned in the above extract, was William Thornton, Eſq of East Newton, who had married Alice, daughter of Lord Deputy Wandesforde, and whose daughter Alice Thornton, became the wife of Dean Comber, our author's grandfather. Vide Comber's Memoirs of Dean Comber, 1799, pp. 32, 47—50.

thor in the warmth of his zeal for the family on the throne, to write some severe and not over cool strictures upon it; and having proceeded to the length of a six-penny pamphlet, he disguised himself, and in a dark night left it with the London carrier, directed to a publisher in town, no otherwise known to him than by the mention of his name in a title page. Having thus quitted the care of his brat to the carrier, he thought no more of it, knowing the chance against its being printed to be more than a hundred to one; till going into a bookseller's shop in York, above ten years after, he discovered his deserted offspring, among a variety of better and worse rubbish upon the counter. The surprise of meeting with an old acquaintance so long forgotten, affected him so much that he was obliged to sit down, to the great concern of a learned friend along with him, who was not apprised of the occasion of his sudden illness, till they were both sufficiently recovered to laugh at it. What became of this pamphlet is not known, that being the only copy the author ever saw in print or ever heard of.

In the spring of the year 1739, the reverend and worthy Mr. Brooke, rector of Richmond, declining fast in his health, and being confined to his sick bed, it was thought high time that Mr. B. should qualify himself to succede him; the living which was in the gift of the Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, having been previously promised to Mr. B. through the interest of Sir Conyers D'Arcy Knight of the Bath, and John Yorke, Esq. then members of Parliament for the town of Richmond. For this purpose Mr. B. having obtained a title in th-

diocese of York, went to London to obtain priest's orders from Dr. Launcelot Blackburne, then Archbishop of York, who sent him with letters dismissory to Dr. Gooch Bishop of Norwich, by whom he was ordained priest, on Sunday March 18th, 1739, at Ely chapel in Holborn. And Mr. Brooke dying soon after, Mr. B. was inducted into the rectory of Richmond, May 18th 1739; the whole expences of the instruments being generously paid by John Yorke, Esq. Mr. B's. constant and valuable friend and benefactor.

Mr. B's. friends had expectations that some preferment would have been conferred upon him by Archbishop Blackburne, having been informed that his grace valued himself upon his family name; but this was mere imagination, nor did Mr. B. pay any court to his grace with any such view. When Mr. B. waited upon the Archbishop to obtain priest's orders, his grace asked him where he was born; to which Mr. B. answered that "He was born at Richmond, but that his ancestors "were of Marricke-Abbey," on which his grace said, "so were mine." — Anthony Wood mentions, Dr. Launcelot Blackburne, as a member of Christ church in Oxford, and author of a sermon intitled, "The unreasonableness of Anger." He says, that he was the son of Mr. Richard Blackburne of London;* probably the same mentioned by Wood p. 647; who is said to have been "born in London, and sometime M. A. of Trinity "college in Cambridge, afterwards Doctor of Physic "at Leyden in Holland, and the compiler of *Vitæ Hobbianæ Auctarium*:" which said Richard we take

* Athen. Oxon. vol. ii. p. 1061.

to have been cousin german to Giles Blackburne of Marricke. This digression is only intended to obviate, some reports relating to our author's connections with the Archbishop, which never were any other than as above.

Mr. B. being now possessed of a parochial cure, set himself down seriously to his studies, and to the discharge of the duties of his office. Concerning the latter, as he was constantly resident in his parish, except for some very short intervals, during above forty years,* the report of his parishioners will be the most authentic account of his conduct among them. It is only meant therefore, to give an account of his literary performances, on what occasions they were composed and made public, or the reasons why some of them were suppressed, observing that in this detail much of his personal history is involved, as well as of his literary friendships and connections.

In the year 1742, Mr. B. was pitched upon by Henry D'Arcy, Esq. of Sedbury in the neighbourhood of Richmond, (then appointed High Sheriff of the county of York) to be his chaplain; on which occasion he preached and published his *Assize Sermon*, the first piece in this collection;† which we have published as we found it in the printed copy, one or two passages excepted, containing an encomium of Bishop Warburton's book on the *Alliance between Church and State*, of which performance as appears in his subsequent writings, Mr. B.

* From 1739 to 1787, forty eight years in all. † Vol. i. pp. 1 -24.

afterwards formed a very different judgment, and accordingly erased those passages with his own hand from the copies remaining in his custody.*

About the same time a litigation happened between the Mayor and Corporation of Richmond, and Dr. Stratford, commissary of the Archdeaconry of Richmond, concerning the illegal removal of the consistory court, and the records belonging to it, to the town of Lancaster, where the said commissary resided. On this occasion Mr. B. wrote two pamphlets asserting the rights of the corporation, and the propriety of restoring the consistory court, and records to the town of Richmond, the capital of the Archdeaconry of Richmond, and the only place where the jurisdiction of the commissary could be legally exercised. The consequence of which was that upon a petition to the Bishop of Chester, Dr. Samuel Peploe, from the mayor and corporation of Richmond, his Lordship ordered the consistory to be re-established at Richmond, and the records to be

* Vol. i. p, 6. l. 7. from the bottom, after the word 'Communion,' the following sentence was originally inserted: [but by 'none with more 'advantage, than by the truly learned and judicious Author of *the Divine* 'Legation of Moses, whom no *Englishman*, well affected to the religion 'and liberties of his country, can pass by with a good conscience, without 'paying him some acknowledgments for the excellent services he has done 'to both.'] "After the labours &c."

Vol. i. p. 24. l. 4. after the word 'Considerations:' the following sentence was originally inserted ['and that such incorporation, even upon 'the fundamental principles of both, is no idle or amusing dream, may 'be clearly understood, from that noble theory of Alliance between eccle-'siastical and civil powers, which a late incomparable writer has raised, 'not upon abstracted schemes of what *should* be in *every* policy, but 'upon express facts, and actual conditions *peculiar* to our *own*:'] from whence &c.

replaced in the registry there, which was accordingly done. But these performances, being of no importance to the public in general, are not inserted in this collection.

In the year 1748, a young man was recommended to Mr. B. for a curate, whose father was a worthy clergyman, well known to Mr. B. and much esteemed by him. This young man being not very well qualified in point of learning, Mr. B. took some pains to improve him, and among other exercises for that purpose, set him to translate *Erasmus's Preface, to his Paraphrase on the gospel of St. Matthew,** containing an earnest exhortation to all ranks of people to study the holy scriptures. When the translation was finished and corrected, it appeared to Mr. B. to be a tract very proper to put into the hands of his parishioners; and accordingly having written a *Preliminary discourse, addressed to the Roman catholic gentry and laity of Great Britain,*† and added a few marginal notes, he procured a cheap edition of it, recommending it to the public, partly as an antidote against popery, but chiefly as an encouragement to the common people to be diligent in reading the scriptures, for the information and improvement of themselves and families, in christian knowledge and christian piety.

In the year 1749 appeared for the first time, *Free and Candid Disquisitions relating to the Church of England;* containing many sensible observations on the defects and improprieties in the liturgical forms of faith and worship of the established church, and proposals of amendments and alterations, of such passages as were

* Vol. i. pp. 56—89. † Vol. i. pp. 25—55.

liable to reasonable objections. This work was a compilation of authorities, taken from the writings of some eminent divines of the church of England, tending to shew the necessity or at least the expedience of revising our public liturgy, and of extracts of letters sent or supposed to be sent to the compiler from his correspondents in different parts of the kingdom, approving of his design, and signifying their disposition to promote and encourage it, as there should be occasion.

The compiler, the Rev. Mr. John Jones, vicar of Alconbury near Huntingdon, was a man of a very singular character, pious and regular in his deportment, diligent in his clerical functions, and indefatigable in his studies, which were chiefly employed in promoting this scheme of reformation, conceived and digested long before his *Disquisitions* were made public, but withal affecting a mysterious secresy even in trifles, and excessively cautious of giving offence to the higher powers.

With Mr. B. this gentleman, on the recommendation of Dr. Edmund Law, afterwards bishop of Carlisle, held a correspondence; and to him Mr. Jones sent the greatest part of his work in manuscript,* which was returned to him without so much as the correction of a single slip of the writer's pen; nor was there a single line or word in the *Free and Candid Disquisitions* written or suggested by Mr. B. notwithstanding many confident reports to the contrary.

The truth is, Mr. B. whatever desire he might have to forward the work of ecclesiastical reformation, (which was as earnest at least as Mr Jones's) could not

* Vid. Vol. I. p. 315.

possibly conform his style to the milky phraseology of the *Disquisitions*; nor could he be content to have his sentiments mollified, by the gentle qualifications of Mr. Jones's lenient pen. He was rather, (perhaps too much) inclined to look upon those who had in their hands, the means and the power of reforming the errors, defects, and abuses in the government, forms of worship, faith and discipline of the established church, as guilty of a criminal negligence, from which they should have been roused by sharp and spirited expostulations. He thought it became Disquisitors, with a cause in hand of such high importance to the influence of vital christianity, rather to have boldly faced the utmost resentment of the class of men to which they addressed their work, than by meanly truckling to their arrogance, to derive upon themselves their ridicule and contempt, which all the world saw was the case of these gentle suggesters, and all the return they had for the civility of their application.

No sooner however, was the book published, than it was violently attacked by several high church zealots; who thought or affected to think, that any step towards a farther reformation, would lead to the utter subversion of the Church of England. Among the rest of these clamorous adversaries, one Mr. Boswell a clergyman and schoolmaster of Taunton in Somersetshire, a man of considerable reading, appeared in some tragical remarks on this pernicious book, but written without a single grain either of candor or patience.

In answer to this gentleman's *Remarks*, Mr. B. without the participation or even knowledge of Mr. Jones,

or any of his more confidential associates, entered the lists, in an *Apology* for *the Authors of the Free and Candid Disquisitions*, printed for Millar, 1750.* This performance (the literary by-blow above mentioned excepted,) was the first exertion of Mr. B's. controversial talents, communicated to the public; and though a very imperfect composition, procured him encouragement, among the very few to whom the author of the *Apology* was known, to cultivate his turn for that kind of writing, by which he was led into many inconveniences, he neither did nor could foresee; and which if he had foreseen, he should not perhaps (as he used to say) have had either the prudence or the pusillanimity to avoid them.

Upon his antagonist this pamphlet wrought no otherwise than as an instigation to a farther degree of insanity, which broke out in a voluminous octavo full of passionate abuse, and a waste of impertinent quotations from orthodox antiquity; for which the poor man (who afterwards had the misfortune to lose his reason,) was properly, but very tenderly reprehended by other hands.

This *Apology* and a *Letter* inserted in Mr. Jones's second appeal from p. 170, to p. 181, were all the pieces Mr. B. wrote, that had any immediate connection with the *Free and Candid Disquisitions*.

His next publication was, *A Short Discourse on the nature, obligation and benefits of Family Religion*;† a small pamphlet printed at his own expence, and distributed among his parishioners. Such as it is, it may serve to shew, at least, that amidst the other employments of

* Vol. ii. pp. 135—178. † Not inserted in the present collection.

his pen, he was not unmindful of the more immediate occasions of his parishioners.

On the eighteenth of July 1750, Mr. B. was collated to the Archdeaconry of Cleveland, and on the first of August following to the Prebend of Bilton, by Dr. Matthew Hutton, then Archbishop of York, to whom he had been for some years titular chaplain.*—Such of Mr. B's. friends as judged of his disposition, by the influence that fear and hope have upon the majority of mankind, concluded, that, upon this promotion he would write no more *Apologies* for such books, as the *Free and Candid Disquisitions;* and some of them were a little pleasant with him upon that subject; to whom he only answered with a cool indifference, that he had made no bargain with the Archbishop for his liberty. He had good reason indeed to believe, that his grace was not unacquainted with his sentiments; nor was he a stranger to the Archbishop's liberal notions on ecclesiastical affairs. When he first went to Bishopthorpe to be collated to the Archdeaconry, he was shewn into the chaplain's room, where the first thing he saw, was the above-mentioned *Apology* lying upon the table; and he had reason to believe, from some conversation he had with his grace before he left him, that he was suspected to be the author

* 'I heartily wish you joy of that accumulation of preferment which 'you have been so long intitled to, and which though it cannot add either 'to the real merit or to the interior respectableness of the person, who 'must dignify it, yet as it will give him frequent opportunity of indoctrinating his brethren in those parts, and may add somewhat to his authority in promoting the good work of reformation in which he is so happily 'engaged, I thereiff do and will again rejoice.'

Dr. Edmund Law, to F. B. August 1750.

of it.—But there was a candor and generosity in Archbishop Hutton, rarely to be met with in men of his grace's station. Mr. B. had been warmly recommended to his grace when he was Bishop of Bangor, by his steady friend John Yorke, Esq. and Mr. B. himself having lived in the neighbourhood of his grace's family at Marske, [near Richmond, E.] for more than ten years, his grace had some personal knowledge of the man, and of his general character in that neighbourhood; and the Archbishop was known to say on a certain occasion, that his own knowledge of Mr. B. had as great a share in his preferment, as the solicitation of his friends.

In the summer of the year 1752, Mr. B. made his third visitation of the Archdeaconry of Cleveland, and was desired to print the *Charge*,* he gave the clergy on that occasion; which is followed in this collection by a *Sermon* preached at Richmond, at the ordination held there by Dr. Keene, then bishop of Chester, October 15th, 1752. To these two pieces belongs no particular history.

In the latter end of the same year, Mr. B. paying a visit to a gentleman, his parishioner, found him reading a charge delivered by Dr. Joseph Butler, bishop of Durham, to the clergy of his diocese at his primary visitation in 1751. The gentleman informed him, that it had just been put into his hands by a Roman Catholic neighbour, who exulted not a little that the sentiments of so eminent a prelate, were so conformable to

shew,

* Not inserted in the present collection.

* Vol. ii.

the regard paid by the papists to the ceremonies of the church of Rome.

Mr. B. much surprised at this information, and no less at some particular passages in the bishop's discourse, pointed out to him by his friend, took the first opportunity to procure a copy of this remarkable charge, in which he found some doctrines so diametrically opposite to the principles on which the protestant reformation was founded and supported, that he thought they deserved to be exposed and censured, to prevent the mischief they might do under the sanction of so considerable a name.

The remarks upon this pastoral discourse being ready for publication, were communicated to a learned friend, upon whose judgment the author was disposed to rely, before he finally determined to commit them to the press. Part of an answer to the letter Mr. B. wrote to his friend on this occasion, he had leave to prefix to his pamphlet. In another part, which is suppressed, the gentleman approved indeed of the contents of his performance, but strenuously dissuaded him from publishing it, on the consideration of the high character of the bishop for piety and learning, of the difficulty he would find of keeping himself undiscovered, and the bar which the freedom of his remarks would prove, (should he be known to be the author) to his pretensions to future perferment.

These remonstrances made no impression upon Mr. B. His opinion was, that the more exalted the station and character of the writer, the greater was likewise the necessity of obviating his influence, when it was em-

ployed to propagate erroneous principles, especially of so great importance in matters of religion; and that when truth and reason demanded his testimony, and the public might be benefited by it; he should never have any concern for the consequences to himself.

The book was accordingly published with the title of *A Serious Enquiry into the use and importance of external religion*, &c. printed for Bladon, 1752.

It remained for some time uncertain to whom this obnoxious pamphlet should be ascribed. It seems however, that Archbishop Secker, soon after his promotion to Canterbury, by the diligence of his emissaries and the indiscretion of the printer, found out who was the reputed offender against his bosom friend Bishop Butler; and his resentment was aggravated by the consideration, that these remarks might be alledged as some confirmation, of the suspicion entertained by certain persons, that the bishop (whose decease happened soon after the publication of this pamphlet) died in communion with the church of Rome.

Of this discovery Mr. B. was totally ignorant till the year 1766, when the first edition of the *Confessional* came out. Dr. Secker had been prompted to the see of Canterbury, in the year 1757 or 1758, without the least diminution of his anxious vigilance, for the honour and interest of the church of England. The author of the *Confessional* was accordingly soon discovered, and his exclusion from future perferment, cordially announced by the Archbishop at his own table, as well on account of this second instance of his delinquency,

* Vol i pp. 91—172.

as of the enormity of his strictures on bishop Butler's charge.

Mr. Richard Baron, a dissenting minister, well known to the public in his day, was perfectly apprised of the Archbishop's principles and character, and kept his eye upon his grace's manœvures, with as much attention and as much opposition, as his grace gave to the attempts of heretical pravity. The open declaration, made by his grace against Mr. B. among his guests as above-mentioned, could not be long concealed from Mr. Baron, whose aversion to the Archbishop's principles and conduct, as much perhaps as the consideration of the merit of the work, occasioned the *Serious Enquiry*, to be inserted in the fourth volume of a collection of tracts, intitled, *The Pillars of Priestcraft and Orthodoxy shaken*, and there ascribed to Mr. B. to his great surprise, as he did not personally know Mr. Baron, nor had any connection with him by correspondence or otherwise.

Thus was the prognostic of Mr. B's. friend, of the consequences of this publication fulfilled; any prospect the author might have had of further preferment in the church under episcopal patronage, being effectually intercepted by this solemn denunciation of Archbishop Secker.*

When the act for changing the style was passed into a law, various were the objections made to it from different quarters. But the great offence it gave to the common people, and indeed to several persons of rank

* For some account of the censures afterwards pronounced by another prelate on our author, vide the Apdendix [A] to these memoirs.

and education was, that the new law obliged them to commemorate the nativity of Christ, on a day which was not the true anniversary of that important event.

In some parishes it was insisted that the minister should observe old Christmass day, which according to the new style fell on the fifth of January. Some of Mr. B's parishioners expostulated with him upon that occasion, to whom he answered, that if they chose it, he would preach them a sermon on the fifth of January, provided they would excuse him from reading the service appointed for Christmass day. Accordingly a *Sermon** was prepared, but as we believe, not preached, some of his friends to whom he shewed it, advising him, as we have heard, rather to print it, and to distribute copies among his neighbours; which was done and no more heard of old Christmass day.

It may be observed, that our author carried matters much farther in this sermon, than he had done in his *Serious Enquiry;* even to avow some scruples he had to minister in the church of England, on account of what he called *beggarly elements.*† These however, he came to think were matters of no great moment in comparison of other exceptionable circumstances in the forms and discipline of the church. What these were, what opinion he formed of them, and what conduct he observed with respect to them, we shall see in the sequel.

In the year 1753 was published, a collection of visitation charges, on the rubrics and canons of the church

* Vol. i. pp. 173—202. † Vid. pp. 191, &c.

of England, delivered by Dr. Thomas Sharpe, Archdeacon of Northumberland, to the clergy of his Archdeaconry. Mr. B. had this collection sent him by an acquaintanee, who signified his desire to know Mr. B's. opinion of the contents. Mr. B. as appears by a letter in his custody, civilly* declined this task. He was however, afterwards prevailed with to oblige another friend, with a few pages of *Remarks* upon some passages of these charges, which he thought to be the most exceptionable. These *Remarks* were found in manuscript, among Mr. B's papers *corrected,* as he had noted, *for the Press,* with some appearances that they had passed through several hands, being much soiled and worn. What prevented the publication of them at the time they were written, is not remembered. They are now given to the public just as they were found.

In the same year 1753, an Act of Parliament was passed for naturalizing the Jews, under certain restrictions therein expressed; but the clamours of the populace, encouraged by the bigotry of some wrong headed divines, quickly procured a repeal of it. On this last event Mr. B. wrote, *A Candid Address to the Jews residing or desiring to reside in Great Britain, occasioned by the repeal of a late Act of Parliament, in their favour.*† To this address was added, *A Postscript to the Christian Reader,* occasioned by a passage in one of the Rev. Josiah Tucker's pamphlets, where an objection thrown out by Bishop Butler, to the naturalization of foreign protestants, was mentioned by Dr. Tucker, with

* Vol. i. pp. 327—348. † Vol. i. pp. 237—282.

deference and respect. Neither this *Address* nor the *Postscript* were then published; but the *Postscript* being communicated to Dr. Tucker, (afterwards dean of Bristol) in manuscript, was answered by the Dr. not without some acrimony, apparently upon the supposition that the honour of bishop Butler, as well as his own (reflected upon, as he took it in that *Postscript,*) required a smart animadversion. This answer was conveyed to Mr. B. by a common acquaintance of both parties, and replied to by Mr. B. as the reader will find at the end of the *Address.**

In the year 1754, *A Letter* was written and sent *to Dr. Thomas Herring, Archbishop of Canterbury,* drawn up by Mr. B. in concert with a few friends to church reformation. The presumption was that Dr. Herring, having the reputation of a candid liberal-minded prelate, might be induced to use his influence in recommending, and promoting the correction of some errors, and abuses in the established system of the Church, from whatever quarter such reformation might be suggested. No public notice however, was taken of this *Letter*, nor was it attended with any visible consequences; nor indeed was it heard of beyond the conscious circle of projectors, till the year 1771, when it was printed for *Payne*, among other preparations for that petition to Parliament, which in the following year was presented for relief in the case of subscription, &c.†

"—— the time of Mr. B's admission in the Univer-
ambridge, he contracted an intimacy with Mr.

* pp. 283—326. † Vol. ii. pp. 101—134.

Edmund Law, then a student of St. John's College,* and long afterwards bishop of Carlisle. This friendship continued many years as will be observed in the course of this narrative. In the year 1755 appeared, *An Appendix* to Dr. Law's *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, "concerning the use of the word SOUL in "Holy Scripture; and the state of DEATH, there de-"scribed." This was called, *The soul sleeping system*,† and listed by the orthodox among the heresies of the times.

Mr. B. from an early consideration of the subject had, with some little difference in his ideas of it, adopted the doctrine of this *Appendix*; and the Dr. being attacked from several quarters, and among others by *Dr. Peter Stephen Goddard*, Master of Clare-hall, in a *Sermon preached at St. Edmund's-Bury*, Mr. B. stood forth in defence of his friend, and published, *No Proof in the Scriptures of an intermediate State of Happiness or Misery between Death and the Resurrection*, wherein the notions of some other persons, besides those of Dr. Goddard, are considered and brought to the test of scripture.‡

* 'Dr. Law I have personally known for one of the kindest of friends 'and honestest of men for thirty years; and were I to be unaffected with 'any thing which has a tendency to hurt either his fortunes or his repu-'tation, I should myself be neither kind nor honest.' F. B. to Mr. Warburton, 26 Feb. 1751.

† 'The opposite doctrine might with equal propriety, and with more 'pointed ridicule, have been intitled the *soul dreaming system*.' Remark of a friend.

‡ Vol. ii. pp. 179–260.

Dr. Goddard was indeed but a feeble adversary in comparison with the next, with whom Mr. B. was engaged. The bishop of London, Dr. Sherlock had published some sermons in 1754, preached chiefly at the Temple; in which were some passages, supposed by an advocate for Dr. Warburton's systems to have no favourable aspect towards the doctrines of the *Divine Legation of Moses*, and other pieces of the same eminent Author. To obviate the impression these passages might make upon the reader of those sermons to the disadvantage of his client, the learned advocate published, *A Free and Candid Examination of the principles advanced in the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London's very elegant Sermons lately published.* In this pamphlet the author dealt about his strictures upon the writings of many learned and eminent men without reserve. Among others, Dr. Edmund Law came in for his share of reprehension for *reviving*, as the author expressed it, *the old exploded hypothesis of the sleep of the soul.*

On this provocation, Mr. B. wrote, *Remarks on Dr. Warburton's Account of the Sentiments of the early Jews concerning the Soul.** These *Remarks* have been esteemed to be Mr. B's master piece, but narrowly escaped suffocation in the birth. The manuscript was entrusted to the care of Andrew Millar, whose press Mr. B. had before made use of. Millar at that time was employed in preparing a new edition of the *Divine Legation of Moses*; of which indeed, upon his recieving the manuscript, he gave the *Remarker* notice, promising

* Vol. ii. pp. 261—338.

at the same time, that justice should be done to the pamphlet, which after some delay, was printed for M. Cooper, 1757. But being understood to bear hard upon Mr. Millar's more consequential benefactor, it was but very imperfectly published; for though very few had bought it, there was not one copy of it to be had a month after the first and only notice that was given of it in a newspaper. The wicked motto *Scilicet ut Turno contingat regia conjux*, &c. was said to be in a great measure the occasion of the obstruction, as it was supposed to allude to Dr. Warburton's matrimonial alliance with Mr. Allen, of Prior Park. This supposed allusion, however, which occasioned so much pleasantry, and particularly to a venerable prelate,* Mr. B. declared never entered his imagination, the *regia conjux*, alluding to nothing in his idea, but Dr. Warburton's sovereignty in the department of literature, and the havock the *Free and Candid Examiner* had made of so many considerable characters in order to establish it.

In 1758 came out the third edition of the second volume, in two parts, of the *Divine Legation of Moses*, printed for Millar, and the two Tonsons; in which it appeared, that the author had endeavoured to profit by the *Remarks* made on certain passages as exhibited in the former edition, several alterations being made in those passages, with a view to elude the force of the *Remarks* upon them.

This manœuvre obliged Mr B. to publish, *A Review of some passages in the last edition of the Divine*

* Bishop Hoadly.

Legation of Moses demonstrated, by the Author of Remarks, &c. This pamphlet indeed did not appear till 1759: but being properly a sequel to the *Remarks*, it is placed in this collection immediately after them.*

In the year 1756 were published, "*Letters which* "*passed between the Right Reverend Robert* [Clayton] "*Lord Bishop of Corke, now Lord Bishop of Clogher,* "*and Mr. William Penn, concerning baptism.*" Mr. B. thought the arguments brought in these *Letters*, both those of the bishop and Mr. Penn, were weak and inconclusive, and in that persuasion wrote, *Some sentiments of a country Divine concerning the ordinance of Baptism, wherein are considered some passages in a late pamphlet intitled, Letters, &c. addressed to a neighbouring clergyman.*†

The next piece in the collection is a mere *Jeu d'esprit* and may serve to shew that Mr. B. did not confine himself so strictly to theological speculation, as to debar himself of the common privilege of Englishmen of rambling into politics. In the year 1758, or perhaps in the latter end of 1757 was published, *Swift's History of the four last years of the Queen*, concerning the authenticity of which there was much verbal controversy, when and where Mr. B. often bore a part. His sentiments on the subject, he chose to put down upon paper, under the fictitious title of *Three Letters to a noble Lord, on Dr. Swift's History of the four last years of the Queen*, which it is presumed the reader will not think altogether unworthy of a place in this collection.‡

* Vol. ii. pp. 339.—to the end.

† Not inserted in the prefent collection:—but for an account of the main argument—vide Appendix [B.]

‡ Thefe Letters are not inferted in the prefent collection. The drift

On Commencement Sunday, 1757, *Dr. Powell* an eminent Tutor of St. John's College, preached a *Sermon before the University of Cambridge, in defence of Subscriptions to the Liturgy and XXXIX Articles of the Church of England.* The report then was, that Dr. Rutherford (between whom, and Dr. Powell, there was a kind of rivalship) had in some public exercise, thrown out, that these subscriptions were intended by the church as a real and proper test of the uniformity of opinions, and consequently that it was the duty of those, of whom they were required, to subscribe in the strict literal sense of the several ecclesiastical forms to which they put their names. This opinion, Dr. Powell in the abovementioned sermon thought fit to controvert, insisting that a latitude was allowed to subscribers even so far as to admit of the assent and consent of different persons, to different and even opposite opinions, according to their different interpretations of the propositions to be subscribed. Dr. Powell's casuistry on the subject, appeared to Mr. B. so detestable, and so subversive of the principles of good faith among men, that he determined to expose and refute it to the best of his power, and accordingly prepared, and in a little time published, *Remarks on the Rev. Dr. Powell's Sermon in defence of Subscriptions, &c.* to which is prefixed an

of the writer's argument is to shew, that the copy from which the History was printed, was the only copy which the Dean had ever written, and as complete as he could write it, consistently at least with the discovery made at the period where the History breaks off, that the Lord Treasurer Harley had availed himself, as far as with safety he could, of the high-flying tories, and was then putting to sea again on a fresh tack of his own, to their infinite mortification and disappointment.

affecting *Address to the younger students in both our Universities*: printed for A. Millar, 1758.*

Mr. B. had begun some years before this to think seriously upon the case of ecclesiastical subscription. When he took possession of the living of Richmond, he had been engaged as abovementioned, in a way of life that did not give him time or opportunity to reflect upon subjects of that nature with precision; and though, upon taking his first preferment, he determined conscientiously to perform the duties of it, yet he was by no means aware of the difficulties that afterwards embarrassed him in qualifying himself for holding it. He therefore then subscribed as directed by law, without scruple, and without apprehending the obligation he laid himself under, according to the form, of giving his assent and consent to the whole system of the church.

When the same form was to be subscribed to qualify him to hold the Archdeaconry and Prebend, he consulted some of his friends, and particularly Dr. Law, who gave him his opinion at large, containing such reasons, as had occurred to himself on the several occasions he had to undergo that discipline. He was likewise referred to Dr. Clarke's Introduction to his Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity; and lastly, to the sixth Article of the Church of England; all which appeared plausible enough to satisfy him, for that time, that with these salvos and modifications, he might safely subscribe in the prescribed forms.

But when, upon another prospect of advancement in the church, he began to consider the subject more intensely

* Vol. vi. pp. 1-108.

and found reason to think that the authorities on which he had depended, were not of sufficient weight or force to over-rule his own scruples, from that time he settled it with himself never to subscribe again. About the same time it was that he began to make collections for that work which afterwards appeared under the title of *The Confessional,* in the progress of which he was much applauded and encouraged by his old friend Law, but not assisted by him or any one else. But of this by and by.

The next piece in order of time met with among Mr. B's papers, contains some * *Notes on a manuscript explanation of the Church's Doctrine of the Trinity,* by Dr. Sharpe, Archdeacon of Northumberland. This was a subject which Mr. B. was always desirous to avoid. But the manuscript being sent to him by a friend, who solicited his opinion upon it, he wrote these notes, not with a view of delivering his own sentiments on the Trinity, but only to shew the weakness of Dr. Sharpe's arguments in support of the doctrine of the church.

Mr. B's attachment to Dr. Law, and his agreement with him on the doctrine of an intermediate state, would not permit him to overlook any attacks on the Doctor's *Appendix* to his *Considerations* without some animadversion. In the year 1757, Dr. Morton, Rector of Bassingham, and formerly of Oxford, addressed some "Queries to the Rev. Dr. Law, relative to what he "had advanced on the soul of man, and a separate "state." The same year, one Mr. John Steffe pub-

* Vol. i. pp. 349—to the end.

lished, *Five Letters*, in the two first of which he attempts to overthrow Dr. Law's hypothesis; and in 1758, the same Mr. Steffe published *Two Letters*, in the first of which he attacks Dr. Law's Appendix directly, and in the second, defends the first of his Five Letters above-mentioned. Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Caleb Fleming, had likewise thrown many abusive remarks on Dr. Law's Appendix.* These three adversaries Mr. B. undertook to confute. The manuscript was completely prepared for

* A cessation of hostilities afterwards took place betwixt this gentleman and Mr. Blackburne, as appears from the Memoirs of Thomas Hollis Esq. p. 382.

'Of Mr. Hollis's correspondence at home [in the year 1767. E.] we 'meet with very few remains; men of merit and of liberal principles 'he encouraged and cherished, without respect to denomination or reli-'gious profession.

'It happened that two of these had entered into a pen-war, about some 'particular points of Theology, in which the gentleman who gave the 'provocation [Caleb Fleming. E.], was handled with some severity by 'his opponent [Francis Blackburne. E.] unknown at that time to Mr. 'Hollis, who had for some time been the friendly patron of the other.

'Mr. Hollis becoming acquainted afterwards with the defendant, 'brought about a reconciliation, or rather indeed a cessation of hostilities, 'observing, that as they agreed in points of more consequence, it was 'not worth their while to quarrel about matters, where the truth was 'neither so discernible, nor so important as upon other subjects, upon 'which they had each "unanimously" employed his pen.

'Speaking of the person who made the attack, in a letter to the defen-'dant, dated December 19th, 1767, he says, "Whenever this good "man trips in any degree, he is proportionably concerned; and I know "he has an high and affectionate respect for you."

'To which the answer is: "It is impossible I should carry on any "farther controversy with a friend of Mr. Hollis, and an honest man." Vide also Vol. iii. p. 348. of the present work.

the press; but the publication was postponed, for what reasons we cannot say.

The *Discourse on the study of the Scriptures*, was delivered in the way of a charge to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Cleveland in the summer 1763.*

In the year 1765, Mr. B. attentive to his own convictions, as well as to the honour and reputation of his friend Law, published, *A Short Historical View of the controversy concerning the Intermediate state between Death and the Resurrection, with a Prefatory Discourse on the use and importance of Theological Controversy.*† He began with the decision of the council of Florence, and carried down his enquiry to the eighteenth century. But some friends having suggested to him, that he had not taken proper notice of several writers of reputation who had employed their pens on that subject, he published a second edition of it in 1772, of which a further account will be given in its place.

It has been mentioned above, that Mr. B. had, not without some scruples, prevailed upon himself to subscribe to the XXXIX articles, in order to qualify himself to hold the Archdeaconry of Cleveland and Prebend of Bilton. His chief inducements at that time, were the reasonings of Dr. Clarke in his Introduction to the Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, a manuscript half sheet drawn up by Dr. Edmund Law, and the liberal concession in the sixth Article of the church of England.

Some time afterwards, upon a prospect of farther ad-

* Vol. iv. p. 405. † Vol. iii.

vancement to a considerable preferment, he took occasion to re-consider these several arguments, and thought they fell short of giving that satisfaction which an honest man would wish to have, when he pledges his good faith to society in so solemn a form as that prescribed by the 36th canon, enjoining subscription to the Articles and liturgical forms of the church of England

In this situation of mind, he set himself to examine into the rise and progress of this requisition in Protestant churches, and into the arguments brought in defence, or rather in excuse of it; the result of which was the compilation since known by the name of *The Confessional, or a full and free Inquiry into* the *right, utility,* and *success of establishing Confessions of Faith and Doctrine in Protestant Churches.*

This work lay by him in manuscript for some years. He had communicated his plan to Dr. Edmund Law, who encouraged him greatly in the progress of it, and appears by many letters in the course of their correspondence to have been extremely impatient to have it published. The fair copy however, was never seen by any of the author's acquaintance, one confidential friend excepted, who spoke of its existence and contents to the late patriotic Thomas Hollis, Esq. to whom the author at that time was not personally known.

Mr. Hollis mentioned this manuscript to Mr. Andrew Millar, the bookseller, who in the year 1763, intending a summer excursion to visit his friends in Scotland, was desired by Mr. Hollis to call upon Mr. B. at Richmond, where, after some conversation, the manuscript was consigned to Mr. Millar's care for publication, and ac-

cordingly came out in the spring 1766.* The only condition made with Mr. Millar was, that the author's name should be concealed.

When the book was published, it appeared from the clamour that was raised against it, that grievous offence was taken at it by that part of the clergy who affect to call themselves orthodox. The indignation of Archbishop Secker was excessive. His mask of moderation fell off at once. He employed all his emissaries to find out the author, and by the industry of Rivington, and the communicative disposition of Millar, he succeeded.

Dr. Edmund Keene was then bishop of Chester, and Mr. B's diocesan, and had expressed and indeed shewn in several instances his friendship and benevolence to Mr. B. He wrote a letter to an intimate friend of Mr. B. mentioning the resentment of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and other bishops, against the reputed author; and intimated that if the suspicion which fell upon Mr. B. was groundless, he would do well to silence the imputation, by publicly disavowing the work in print; for that every door of access to farther preferment, would otherwise be shut against him. The answer of Mr. B's friend was, that he had no right to ask Mr. B. any questions of that kind, and that as he himself should think it uncivil and improper to be interrogated upon such a subject, he hoped his Lordship would excuse him for declining to intermeddle, in a matter of that delicacy.

Mr. B. however, on the other hand had the consolation to find, that his book was approved and commended

* Vol. v. Vide alfo Appendix [C].

by several worthy persons, whose esteem he valued at a very high rate. Numbers of Letters* still remain among his papers, testifying the satisfaction the writers had received in perusing *The Confessional;* among which none are written in a higher strain of panegyric, than a number from Dr. Edmund Law, since promoted to the bishoprick of Carlisle.

In the year 1767, a second edition of *The Confessional* appeared, enlarged with a Preface, wherein Dr. Rutherford's principles advanced in a charge to the clergy of his Archdeaconry of Essex, and written professedly against *The Confessional,* are examined, and some notes added, on particular passages, in the same charge, and in a vindication of it in answer to Dr. Benjamin Dawson.

In 1768 Mr. B. published *Considerations on the present state of the controversy, between the Protestants and Papists of Great Britain and Ireland,* &c. It was about that time generally apprehended, that the Papists had since the year 1761 greatly increased; and Mr. B. himself having had some instances within his own knowledge, tending to prove that such apprehensions were not altogether groundless, he thought it his duty as Archdeacon, to warn the clergy of his district, to be upon their guard in their several departments; and to this end he composed two discourses upon the subject, and being desired to publish the first, he delayed till the second was delivered, that being in a great measure necessary to complete the design of writing the first.†

In the year 1767 came out a small pamphlet intitled,

* Vide Appendix [C].

† Vol. iv. pp. 1—260. Vide also Appendix [D].

Doubts concerning the authenticity of the last (meaning the second) *publication of the Confessional,* manifestly the production of some forward Oxonian, set to work by some of his orthodox superiors, perhaps, as it was then reported, by Archbishop Secker himself. The ignorance, misrepresentation, and malevolence of this self sufficient doubter, were properly exposed and reprehended in another little performance intitled, *Occasional Remarks upon some late strictures on the Confessional.* Part I. printed for Bladon, 1768. *

Dr. Secker was implacable in his resentment, and indefatigable in promoting an opposition to the principles of *The Confessional;* and engaged several writers to enlist in this holy warfare in defence of the church, particularly Dr. Rotherham, Dr. Gloucester Ridley, &c.

When Dr. Warburton's book of Alliance between Church and State first appeared, the old orthodox phalanx was highly scandalized, that the author should desert the old posture of defence, and subject the church to such a humiliating dependence on the state. Dr. Rutherford led the way in an attack upon *The Confessional,* and skirmished in the old posture prescribed in the ancient system of church authority. It was found by the several answers to the Dr's *Charge and Vindication,* that this method would not do. Accordingly Dr. Rotherham in his *Essay on Establishments* &c. took a different route. Warburton's system was Hobbism trimmed and decorated with various distinctions and subterfuges, which were by no means intelligible to common apprehensions, and very apt to mislead the su-

* Vol vi. pp. 109—161.

perficial or inattentive reader, into an approbation of the more plausible parts which lay more open to their understandings.

Dr. Balguy was the only one who seems to be fully apprised of the latent meaning of his master Warburton, to whose 'little senate' he was said to have belonged. But he entered late into the controversy; and Dr. Rotherham not having the advantage of his finesses, adopts in his Essay a system of Hobbism,* almost as crude and undisguised as that of the Malmsburian philosopher, in his Leviathan.

Archbishop Secker was animated with the spirit of Laud, Gibson, and others of that stamp, as appears plainly by many passages in his charges, and particularly in his *Oratio Synodalis* delivered in Convocation 1761, and was consequently attached, in his judgment, to the *old posture of defence*. Yet he was contented to accept of the assistance of Dr. Rotherham; and if the memorable Richard Baron's information was authentic, revised and embellished that gentleman's Essay with his own hand.

But the champion upon whom the Archbishop chiefly depended for completing the downfall of *The Confessional*, was Dr. Ridley the reputed author of Three Letters, to the author of *The Confessional*. We

* 'Doubts and the *Essayist* are but skimmers of science, neither of them 'deep. The performance of the latter put me in mind forty times, as I 'read him, of what Jortin says in his lately republished *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*—" Public wisdom often begins with the gospel ac-" cording to St. Matthew, and ends with the gospel according to Thomas " Hobbes."

F. B. to Thomas Hollis, Esq. Feb. 7th, 1768.

say the *reputed* author: for it is a matter of fact, that the greatest part if not the whole of the *first* of those Letters was the manufacture of Archbishop Secker himself. As this first Letter attacked only the preface to *The Confessional*, and aimed at diminishing the estimation and good faith of the author, by personal reflections, Mr. B. began with an answer to that in the first place: and Dr. Maclaine, the translator of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, having about the same time received materials from the Archbishop, for the defence of Archbishop Wake, (censured in that preface for his treaty with Du Pin and other popish Doctors,) and published them in a pamphlet, supplementary to his translation of Mosheim, Mr. B. added an answer, to Dr. Maclaine in the pamphlet entitled, *Occasional Remarks upon some late strictures on The Confessional*, Part 2d. containing chiefly, *Remarks on the first of three Letters*, &c. and *An Examination of Dr. Maclaine's defence of Archbishop Wake, in a third Appendix of a Supplement* &c. Printed for Bladon, 1769.*

Archbishop Secker, died before the publication of these Occasional Remarks, and nobody appearing in defence of this first Letter, Mr. B. gave himself no trouble about the other two, as they were sufficiently answered and refuted by the excellent pen of Dr. Benjamin Dawson, and by some other friends of the principles of *The Confessional*.†

In the year 1770, a third edition of *The Confessional* was published; with large additional notes relative to

* Vol. vi. pp. 165—to the end.

† 'It is high time for the Author of a certain work to make his acknowledgements for the honour done to the late publication of it, by a

several adversaries of that work, and from that copy it is printed in the following collection: [with an Appendix from the author's M. S. containing a short history of the Confessions established in the Church of Scotland, at different periods. E.]

It was the heart's desire of Archbishop Secker, to settle Bishops in North-America, to promote the honour and interest of the Church of England, and to introduce among the colonists the doctrine and discipline of that church. His attempts to bring about his favourite scheme, being defeated by the prudence of the ministers for the time being in his Grace's life time, he left an order with his executors to print a *Letter* he had written to *Horatio Walpole*, in January 1751, on the subject of spiscopising America, which was accordingly published by the Rivingtons in 1769.

Mr. B. looked upon this letter as highly inflammatory with respect to the disputes of our government, with the colonists of America, at the time of it's publication. His own treatment from the Archbishop during his life time, afforded Mr. B. no argument to compliment the memory of that prelate, with the suppression of his sentiments on so important a subject; but the maxim *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*, to which his grace

* gentleman on whose friendship the said author will value himself to the
* last moment of his life, and to whom he has so many other most substan-
* tial obligations.

* A fit of illness for above six weeks during the months of July and
* August hath not a little discomposed a frame already shaken with a load
* of threescore years, and weakened a brain not overstocked at any time
* with quick apprehension or correct arrangement of valuable ideas. It will,
* he hopes, be some atonement for the little he has been able to do, that
* he never left the paths of Truth and Liberty, to seek his bread or his ap-

had certainly no title upon this occasion, as he had taken measures to propagate his injudicious and irritating notions after his decease,* which Mr. B. thought it expedient to obviate, by *a Critical Commentary on Archbishop Secker's Letter to the Right Honourable Horatio Walpole, concerning Bishops in America*, printed for Dilly, 1770.†

About the end of the year 1770, Mr. B. received an anonymous letter, suggesting the expedience and propriety of his attempting to bring into practice, some plan for relief in the matter of subscription, in consequence of the conviction his arguments in *The Confessional* had wrought on the minds of several of his worthy and intelligent brethren, who were desirous a trial should be made, how far the legislature were disposed to release them from a bondage so opprobrious to the principles, and so inconsistent with the professions of the Protestant religion.

This letter seemed to be written by a person possessed with a zeal not over temperate, and too forward to load the author of *The Confessional* with obligations, the cogency of which he could not perceive. But however,

'plause in the walks of frivolism, systematical jargon, or abject adulation 'of the *fastus prælaticus* of the present times. The blessings of Providence 'have to him been remarkable in a state of mediocrity; and he would be of 'all men the most ungrateful, should he repine for what he could not 'have, along with that peace of mind which he hopes he shall preserve 'unbroken, till the night in which no man can work shall close the even-'ing of life sooner or later, as shall please the giver of it.'

F. B. to T. Hollis, Esq. Oct. 26, 1770.

* Vid. Vol. ii. p. 83. † Vol. ii. pp. 1—100.

as the object of it seemed to be laudable, and not void of reason, he thought it worthy of farther consideration, and wrote to some of his calmer and more judicious friends on the subject; who after a mutual intercourse of letters, requested Mr. B. to draw up something of a sketch of what should be adviseable, in case a sufficient number of clergymen and others aggrieved by the imposition might be willing to join in an application to Parliament, in order to obtain some reasonable relief in a case where it seemed to be so much wanted. This opinion of his friends engaged Mr. B. to draw up,—*Proposals for an Application to Parliament, for relief in the matter of Subscription to the Liturgy and 39 articles of the established Church of England, humbly submitted to the consideration of the learned and conscientious clergy of the said Church.**

These proposals were immediately printed, and were opposed and supported alternately, in various little tracts and rescripts, according to the different dispositions of the men into whose hands they fell.

But notwithstanding the discouragement of the bishops,† and other great churchmen at that period, and their known aversion to any steps taken towards a reformation in the church, the friends of christian liberty

* Vol. vii. pp. 1—14.

† To this censure one exception at least must be made in honour of the venerable bishop Law, whose cordial good wishes to the cause of the petitioning clergy were made known in a letter to Mr. B. from a common friend, 16th May, 1771; who writes as follows. 'I gave him the Pro-'posals; we read them as we walked: from the manner of his reading I 'soon was able to divine his sentiments. In short he immediately and 'most cordially wished us success.—He said, he supposed you were ac-'quainted with it; I answered, it had been communicated to you.—He

went on in their attempt; advertised a meeting at the Feather's-Tavern in the Strand, at which several respectable clergymen and gentlemen of other professions were present, joined in an Association, and at a subsequent meeting a Petition was drawn up, which was afterwards signed by about two hundred persons, and presented to Parliament on the sixth day of February 1772.

The debates on this Petition in the House of Commons, may be seen in various periodical publications of that time. It was nobly supported by patriots of the first reputation in that honourable assembly. But the minister and his friends, and some who upon other questions were not his friends, being zealously prejudiced against it, it underwent that kind of reprobation, which has fallen to the share of many more attempts, however reasonable and righteous, to reform established systems, supported by the united exertions of political and ecclesiastical power.

The Proposals for an application to Parliament, as well as the Petition itself, are exhibited in the Appendix to this collection.*

'asked from what quarter the project arose. I answered, from a clergyman in London, with whom I was now acquainted.—I observed that his Lordship was not made privy to it; in order that he might better answer any questions from Lambeth or elsewhere.—He answered, that if such questions were put to him, he should tell them, he approved the scheme, and should think hardly of those who disapproved or endeavoured to obstruct it; that he would upon every occasion support it though single, that he should gladly attend the Parliament next winter and that he now had a new reason to rejoice in being made bishop.'

* Vide Vol. vii. pp. 1—32.

Some of Mr. B's. friends having intimated to him, that the *Short Historical view of the controversy concerning an Intermediate State*, published in the year 1765, had omitted to take notice of several writers, both in former and later times upon the subject, who deserved animadversion, and desirous of another and more complete edition, Mr. B. in the year 1772 prepared a second edition of that work, exhibiting the opinions of Tyndal the protestant martyr, Anthony de Dominis, Thomas White, Archbishop Secker, Bishop Warburton, Dr. Jortin, &c.

The two venerable prelates, Secker and Warburton, being treated in these additional remarks with more freedom than they, who read their elogies in magazines and newspapers, may think becomes the pen of a writer in an inferior station, it is convenient to apprise the reader of some facts which preceded the publication of the second Edition of the Historical View.

Mr. Peter Peckard,* well known in the literary world by several ingenious tracts in print, and among the rest, one or two against the patrons and advocates of the doctrine of an intermediate state, had occasion (upon his being presented to a second benefice) for a dispensation from the Archbishop of Canterbury. He accordingly repaired to Lambeth, and after several applications was at length admitted to undergo an examination by the Archbishop himself. His heterodoxy, upon the question concerning an intermediate or separate state of conscious existence between death and the resurrection, was laid to his charge as an offence to the

* Afterwards Dr. Peckard, Dean of Peterborough, and Master of Magdalen college, Cambridge.

church sufficient to preclude him from any indulgence of the sort he applied for. His book was produced in proof of the fact, which he was not at all disposed to deny. The result was, that after several adjournments, and when the living he was presented to, was within a day or two of lapsing, he obtained his dispensation, after subscribing certain articles of his Grace's own manufacturing, and promising to write no more upon the subject.

Dr. Law writing to Mr. B. soon after this adventure, facetiously says, "Peter Peckard has escaped out of "Lollard's Tower with the loss of his tail." Mr. B. in his remarks upon Archbishop Secker's Lecture on the subject, barely * alludes to this history, Mr. Peckard for certain reasons chusing not to have his narrative of the transaction made public. But those reasons no longer subsisting, the narrative as it was sent to Mr. B. in Mr. Peckard's own hand writing, is given entire in the Appendix.†

* Vol. iii. pp. 286. Note.

Mr. Peckard in the year 1768, had communicated to his friend Mr. B. his intention of collecting the substance of his pamphlets on the intermediate state, and re-printing it in one regular treatise. And notwithstanding certain offers a few years before, which had been rejected with disdain, it was a fundamental part of his design 'to give a fair and circumstantial relation,' by way of preface, 'of all that had passed at Lambeth 'between the Archbishop and himself.' This design which Mr. P. was afterwards advised from prudential considerations to delay for a while, was again postponed in consequence of continued ill health and weak spirits. What ultimately determined him to suppress the publication during his own own life time, was the solicitation of two surviving friends of the deceased Primate, whose concern for his memory thus exerted seems to demonstrate, that they could neither impeach the authenticity of the narrative, nor justify his Grace's conduct to the worthy and injured narrator.

† Vide Appendix [E.]

The readers of that narrative, it is presumed, will not think there is any impropriety in examining, whether Archbishop Secker derived any stronger title to act the Inquisitor upon this occasion from his knowledge of the subject, or his abilities in discussing it, than he could from the law of the land.

With bishop Warburton in the course of the controversy, Mr. B. had accidentally a personal concern. Mr. B. in a conversation with Mr. afterwards Dr. Comber, (Rector of Buckworth, in Huntingdonshire), happened to say, that by accommodating Dr. Warburton's doctrine in his Divine Legation, to Dr. Law's in the Appendix to his Considerations, an account of the state of man, between death and the resurrection might be obtained perfectly agreeable to the sense of the sacred writers; meaning, as Mr. B. then explained himself, that a future state being no doctrine of the Old Testament, otherwise than by prophetic anticipation, or the unauthorised notions of some later jews derived from the fables of paganism, the revelation of it by the means of a resurrection of the dead, preached and confirmed in the history of Jesus Christ, as the author and finisher (or perfecter) of our christian faith, would appear perfectly consistent with the gradual and successive dispensations of God in his dealings with man from the creation of the world.

Dr. Comber at that period aspiring to the honour of being Dr. Warburton's confidential friend, and mistaking the accommodation of two distinct hypotheses to each other for a perfect coincidence, wrote such an account to Dr. Warburton of this conversation, as im-

plied that the latter was represented to be of the same opinion with Dr. Law concerning the sleep of the soul. Dr. Warburton on receiving Dr. Comber's letter, wrote a warm expostulatory letter to Mr. B. peremptorily disavowing his agreement with Dr. Law's hypothesis, and giving the lie in form to every reporter of such agreement whoever he should be. In answer to this letter, Mr. B. stated the occasion and particulars of his conversation with Dr. Comber on the subject as above-mentioned; alledging that no opinions had been ascribed to Dr. Warburton, but those he had expressed in the Divine Legation; and that Dr. Comber was mistaken, being very apt through the impetuosity of his imagination to attempt to set things right before they were wrong. In a civil answer to this letter, Dr. Warburton declared himself perfectly satisfied with Mr. B's account.

The matter however did not end here. Mr. B. in the same conversation, was said to have mentioned a letter he had heard of from Dr. Warburton to Dr. Law, wherein it appeared that Dr. Warburton's sentiments on the subject of a separate state were not unfavourable to the hypothesis of Dr. Law. Dr. Warburton strenuously denied the existence of any such letter, and sent a message to Dr. Law in no very civil terms, by their common friend the Rev. Mr. Browne, vicar of Newcastle, for having told his friend B. the story communicated by Dr. Comber.

Dr. Law upon this expostulation, produced to Dr. Browne the letter in question under Dr. Warburton's own hand, allowed him to take a copy of it, and to sub-

mit it to Dr. W's own inspection. There was now no way of escaping from conviction, and from having the lie in form retorted, but by quibbling away the plain sense of the letter, which, Dr. Warburton who had an excellent talent that way, attempted in another letter to Dr. Law very ingeniously, but as Dr. Law proved in his answer to it, without success. The correspondence on the subject was drawn to some length; and so much of it as came to Mr. B's knowledge is exhibited in the Appendix.*

In the year 1765 came out a new edition of the Divine Legation of Moses, in which Dr. Law and his hypothesis, and several learned adherents to it are treated with ridicule, contempt and insolence. An impartial reader of the correspondence just mentioned will judge, that Dr. Law's candor and temper in his part of it, deserved a very different return for his forbearing to put Dr. Warburton to open shame by publishing his letters: nor will he wonder, that Mr. B. (attached as he was to Dr. Law by the strictest bands of friendship) should undertake to shew the futility of Dr. Warburton's reasoning, not without some asperity of reprehension by way of reprisal.

In the year 1774, Mr. B. published, *Reflections on the fate of a Petition, &c. Offered to the Honourable House of Commons, Feb. 5th,* 1772: with *Observations on the Rev. Dean Tucker's Apology for the present Church of England as by Law established.*†

This pamphlet was first published in quarto in 1773; and the first edition being disposed of, a second was

* Vide Appendix [F.] † Vol. vii. pp. 33—270.

published in octavo in the year 1774, with some additional notes and alterations, and a Dedication to Sir William Meredith, Bart. who (being then member of Parliament for Liverpool) introduced the clerical Petition into the House of Commons.

In the title of these Reflections, Mr. B. calls himself *A Member of a Law Society*; being Commissioner to the Worshipful Commissary of the Archdeaconry of Richmond, and presiding by virtue of that commission in the Consistory Court established at Richmond, in Yorkshire.*

In the year 1773, the Rev. and learned Mr. Theophilus Lindsey, a gentleman of an unblemished character in every respect, being unable to reconcile himself to the forms of the church of England, particularly those which relate to the doctrine of the Trinity, resigned his vicarage of Catterick, in the neighbourhood of Richmond. He had married a daughter of Mrs.

* This office which Mr. Blackburne had held for two or three years in the life time of Mr. Commissary Morgan, he was requested in the most handsome manner by his successor the Right Honourable William Eden, now Lord Auckland to resume, with the increased salary of fifty pounds a year, in consideration of 'the able and satisfactory manner in which the 'duties of that office were performed.' Uniformly of 'a generous and 'disinterested disposition,' he had declared to a friend, 'that if he found 'he could not execute his functions as Judge of the Consistory Court 'with perfect satisfaction of mind, he would resign and retire.' Fortunately however, no such occasion of offence appears to have occurred. And in the discharge of those functions, he was remarkable for the diligent and accurate investigation of every case which came under his cognizance. This appears as well from the reasons yet extant in MS on which his decrees were founded, as from the known fact, that in the few appeals from his decision to the Courts of York, or Doctor's Commons, his decrees were always finally confirmed.

Blackburne, by her former husband.* The friendship between Mr. Lindsey and Mr. B. was not nearly so much cemented by this family connection, as by a similarity of sentiments, in the cause of Christian Liberty, and their aversion to ecclesiastical impositions, in matters of conscience. In the warfare on these subjects they went hand in hand; and when Mr. Lindsey left Yorkshire and settled in London, Mr. B. used to say, 'he had lost his right arm.'

Mr. Lindsey on his arrival in town, opened a chapel in Essex-street in the Strand. His sentiments were of the Socinian complexion, in agreement with Dr. Priestley and others; and according to that system Mr. Lindsey corrected the Liturgy of the church of England, upon the model of Dr. Clarke, and published it for the use of his congregation, which was numerous, and made up of most respectable members.

This uncommon instance of self-denial raised up a number of opponents, who had their objections partly to Mr. L's desertion from the established church, but chiefly to his tenets, published in an *Apology* for his conduct, which he was afterwards obliged to second by some controversial pieces in answer to various opponents.

Mr. B. had his objections to the Liturgy and articles

* Hannah Hotham, of York, in the year 1737, was first married to Mr. Joshua Elfworth, of Richmond, and afterwards in the year 1744, to the Rev. Francis Blackburne, rector of that place. By Mr. Elfworth, she had three children.—Hannah, the only surviving daughter, was in the year 1760, married to the Rev. Theophilus Lindsey, now of Essex Street, London, then Vicar of Piddletown, in Dorsetshire, which living he afterwards exchanged for the vicarage of Catterick within five miles of Richmond.

of the church of England, as well as Mr. Lindsey, and in some instances to the same passages, but differed widely from him on some particular points, which, he thought, as stated by Mr. Lindsey and his friends, could receive no countenance from scripture, but by a licentiousness of interpretation that could not be justified.

It was not consistent with Mr. B's friendship for Mr. Lindsey to enter into a formal controversy with him on these particular points; and if that could have been got over, it was not consistent with a resolution Mr. B. had taken early in life, to have as little to do with the Trinitarian controversy as possible.

But Dr. Priestley and some of his friends having carried the obligation to secede from the church of England, farther than Mr. B. thought was either sufficiently candid, charitable, or modest, and had thereby given countenance to the reproach, thrown upon many moderate and worthy men, by hot and violent conformists, for continuing to minister in the church, while they disapproved many things in her doctrine and discipline;*

* 'I cannot think the dissenters will be *universally* pleased with Dr. 'Priestley's account of their principles, not to mention that some degree 'of mercy seemed to be due to us, who have shewn our benevolence to '*all* Protestant Dissenters, and have occasionally asserted their rights of 'conscience with the utmost freedom. But, no, it seems nothing will 'do but absolute migration from our present stations, in agreement with 'our *supposed* convictions, though perhaps, it might puzzle Dr. Priestley 'to find us another church, in which all of us would be at our ease. For 'my own part, I never saw a plan I liked better than Dr. *Rutty's*, (which 'is the Quaker's,) but have, as I think, unanswerable reasons for not 'giving up the two Christian institutions. Can Dr. Priestley point out 'a church to which *no* objection lies? However, I believe him to be a 'thorough honest well-meaning man, and as such, value him extremely.'

Jan. 4th, 1770.

F. B. to Rev. C. *Rotherham dissenting* minister at Kendal.

he thought it expedient, in justice to himself and others of the same sentiments, to give some check to the crude censures, that had been passed upon them.

And accordingly intending to publish *Four Discourses* delivered to the clergy of the Archdeaconry of Cleveland, in the years 1767, 1769, 1771 and 1773, he took that opportunity to explain himself on this subject in a Preface, as well on the behalf of the seceders, as of those whose christian principles admitted of their remaining in the church, without offering violence to their consciences.*

In the year 1776, Mr. B. published, *A Charge delivered at the several Visitations of the Clergy, held in the North Riding of Yorkshire,*† the same year. And soon after, he published without his name, *Two Sermons preached on a Fast day, during the late war with France.*

'Please to take notice, that my approbation of Dr. *Rutty* only respects 'his plan of *discipline*. The title is, "A Treatise concerning Christian "discipline, compiled with the advice of a national meeting of the peo- "ple called Quakers, held in Dublin in the year 1746. By John Rutty, "M. D. Printed in the year 1752." 'No place or publisher. I wonder not at your exceptions to other things among them, which if this 'plan of discipline were followed, would not be so. Perhaps you do not 'suspect that they have a Catechism and Confession of Faith, both in 'English and Latin, in which latter language, I do not remember to have 'seen the Assembly's Catechism or Confession. The Quaker's, I have 'now before me in Latin, the 2d Edition printed at London, 1727.'

F. B. to C. R. Feb. 19th, 1770.

* Vol. iv. pp. 261—404.

† The purpose of this charge is briefly announced in the opening paragraph.

'There are many passages, both in the old and New Testament, which are 'understood to relate more especially, if not exclusively, to the teachers 'of religion. In many of these passages, the pastoral office is uniformly

These sermons were preached in his Parish Church at Richmond, in the year 1759; and the manuscript being in the hands of a friend, who thought they were suitable to the state of public affairs, in the year 1778, he was prevailed with to publish them with a short advertisement, importing that they had been accidentally found among the papers of a person deceased.

On the first day of January 1774, the excellent and ever to be honoured Thomas Hollis, Esq. died suddenly at his seat at Corscombe in Dorsetshire, as he was attending some of his workmen in the fields.

This gentleman had honoured Mr. B. with his correspondence for some years, patronised some of his publications, particularly *The Confessional*, and gave him all possible encouragement, to support the cause of public liberty, by his pen; and to Mr. B's. surprise left him in his Will the generous legacy of five hundred pounds.

On this occasion therefore, he thought himself bound in justice and gratitude to pay some public tribute to his memory, beyond an evanescent encomium in the public prints, of which there were many published on the melancholy occasion; and having consulted Mr.

'spoken of, as an office demanding an heart devoted to truth and sincerity, disengaged from all corrupt affections and sordid attachments, and hands unpolluted with those unrighteous practices, to which what has been called human nature, is perpetually tempted by the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this world.'

* 'The preacher, in his life time, was in low circumstances, and never sought his advancement by attaching himself to any party. He used to say he was of no side, but of the gospel in church matters, and of Great Britain in politics; and by this declaration he regulated his whole practise.' Advertisement.

Hollis's executor, Thomas Brand Hollis, Esq. it was proposed to draw up some memoirs of this worthy patriot's life, for which abundant materials were in the hands of Mr. Brand Hollis, who relished the proposal, and engaged to supply what might be proper for the purpose.

At this time,* Mr. B. was preparing to write the life

* 'Your noble present of Dr. Robertson's History of Charles, V. in 3 Volumes, and Gerdesius's History of the Reformation in 4 Volumes, arrived safe; both most highly valuable and acceptable to the receiver, for which he requests the acceptance of his most grateful thanks.

'Before Mr. Millar called upon me in 1765, some progress had been made in collecting materials and minutes, for the Life of Martin Luther. From that period it became necessary to pay attention to *The Confessional*, to prepare it for appearing the following spring.

'The greatly unexpected impressions made by that work, both upon the friends and adversaries of the subject, laid the author under a necessity of disengaging himself from other attentions, in order to observe the motions of the opposers, and as occasion was given, to obviate them.

'Another work, (the *Considerations*) intervened, and the necessary avocations resulting from the current business of office, a numerous correspondence, and family calls, added to his interruptions, and made his collections, though never totally suspended, go on slowly.

'Mr. Cadell calls for preparations to a third Edition of *The Confessional*, towards which some strictures are to contribute upon gainsayers, which have been postponed, as supposed to be more properly inserted in that work.

'These will necessarily take up some weeks, perhaps months of the summer, after which another work must be prepared for republication, which is promised to the solicitations of a friend, whom I need not name, and to whom I am much obliged. After which I propose to attend singly to Luther, though with many doubts of going through that laborious undertaking, at the age of sixty-four, when *the keepers of the house begin to tremble, the silver cord to be loosed*, and *they that look out of the windows to be darkened*. A fair trial however shall be made, and the event left to the wise and good disposer of all things.'

T. B. to Thomas Hollis, Esq. April 22st, 1769.

of Martin Luther, for which work he had made large collections, and had translated into English, the life of this father of the Protestant reformers, written in Latin by Melchior Adam, intending to add such particulars as were furnished by other authors, in notes and remarks on the text after the manner of Mr. Bayle's Dictionary. But being favoured with some minutes of the deceased, preparatory to a Life of Luther, which that accurate writer intended to compose and publish, Mr. B. changed his plan, and determined to take for his pattern Dr. Jortin's Life of Erasmus.

Upon the death of Mr. Hollis this work was suspended, upon the supposition that after a very few months, dedicated to the memory of Mr. Hollis, the Life of Luther might be resumed: in this however, in the course of his correspondence with Mr. Brand Hollis, he found himself mistaken. The number and variety of the papers communicated by that worthy gentleman, the time taken up in conveying them into the country, the incredible labour employed in selecting, digesting and arranging the particulars, to be properly inserted in the compilation, and the intervals of Mr. B's avocations upon other business, would not allow of more expedition.

Junii die vicesimo tertio 1783. Elapsus est annus unus et alter ex quo hæc scripseram, eo animo ut a dilectissimo filio Thomâ artem medicam feliciter in civitate Dunelmensi per quinquenium exercenti, hæc anecdota præfigerentur operibus meis iterum post mortem meam edendis, quorum operum castigationem et alteram denuo editionem curæ ejusdem charissimi filii

summâ fiduciâ concredidi. Verum interea, proh dolor! sic visum Deo, febrê pleuriticâ abreptus est iste Filius in hoc & aliis officiis mihi maxime necessarius, die Junii 23d, 1782, parentibus ejus, Fratribus & affinibus maxime luctuoso.

Qualis fuerit, testes appellandi sunt plurimi ex ejus concivibus, quibus profuit non solum opem ferendo (annuente Deo) exquisitâ in arte medendi peritiâ et felicissimo successu, sed etiam beneficia præsertim in pauperiores conferendo, pro virili parte variis hujusce ævi malis allevandis accommodatâ. Erat enim animi eousque benevoli, ut nihil humani a se alienum putaret. Erat etiam animo faceto & libero, et, ut erat ingenio eruditione non vulgari præditus, ita omnibus horis subsecivis socius gratissimus.

Quid passus sit pater amarissimâ hac dispensatione per annum hodierno die expletum, Deo soli and sibi ipsi notum est. Supplicavit atque etiam supplicat, ut humili animo omne providentiæ divinæ decretum accipiat et sustineat. Nimis erat elato animo, dum filium tali ingenio et tot dotibus præditum possedit; Quo provocatus forsan omnium rerum pater, elationis illius castigationem hanc privationem esse decrevit.

Est autem cur gratias agam, quod pro summâ benignitate suâ judicio Deus miscuerit misericordiam, et juvenem, nullâ sceleris labe insignitum, nullo infortunio vel casu violento, sed morbo epidemico et multis eo tempore communi abreptum, filium meum (et, ut spero, suum) ex hoc mundo sustulerit.

Peccata mea, Deus misericors, tandem ablue per Jesum Christum Salvatorem, a te missum ut tolleret

peccata mundi. Gravis sum et odiosus ipse mihi, ubi tot commissa contra officium, tot quæ officium postulaverint omissa, memoriæ revoco. Da, precor, animi constantiam, ne amplius incurram in iram tuam misericordis et benignissimi Patris, neu pejus aliquid mihi aut meis accidat.

Et nisi aures tuæ propter improbitatem meam omnino occluduntur, precibus meis, obsecro, annue pro uxore et qui restant filiis et filiabus et pro eorum sobole. Et humiliter tibi supplico ut omnibus hisce gratiam impertire digneris, ut in Christo conversationem habeant, quæ tibi placeat, et quæ tandem locum in regno cœlorum unicuique eorum pro tuâ bonitate et misericordiâ præbeat.

Concede si tibi visum est, filio meo, qui in locum fratris sui demortui substitutus est, salutem et felicitatem, ut munera facultatis suæ obeat cum omni integritate apud homines, et in timore tui Dei et benefactoris omnium fidelium. Concede, ut omnes mei vivant coram te, omnibus officiis fungentes, quæ Christianos decet, tam ratione sanctitatis tuæ habitâ, quam ejus quod sociis et proximis et fratribus æquum est et charitati debitum. Omnia hæc tuæ sanctissimæ voluntati subjecta sint per Jesum Christum. Amen.

After the death of his son Thomas, Mr. B. was so affected with the loss, that he in a great measure laid aside the several things he had proposed to finish; and in two or three years afterwards, his eye sight failing him, he contented himself with dictating such short rescripts, including letters to his friends, as could be taken down by an Amanuensis.

THUS far our Author, whose Memoirs of his own Life and Writings are left off at the account of his labours in compiling the Memoirs of his friend Mr. Hollis.

In the year 1778, besides the *Two Fast Sermons* already mentioned, Mr. B. published *Bishop Taylor's Judgment on Articles and Forms of Confession in particular churches; with Notes and an Epistle Dedicatory to the R. R. the Lord Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry.** The principal object of this publication was 'to offer 'the author's sentiments on Bishop Taylor's performance, and at the same time, to take a more particular view of Bishop Hurd's Charge, by way of contrasting the different ideas of two eminent prelates, 'equally cordial and zealous in their attachment to the 'Church of England; the result of which he presumed, 'would serve to convince the impartial and dispassionate of the little edification or utility to be reaped from 'an unwarrantable policy, which has been so long a 'reproach to the protestant religion, as well as a grievance to so many serious and pious professors of it.'† The *contrast* itself in the very words of the two prelates, is exhibited in half a page at the close of the Epistle Dedicatory,‡ and well merits the attention of the curious reader.

In the year 1779, the intervals of Mr. B's. other avocations appear to have been fully occupied with his final attention to the Memoirs of Thomas Hollis, Esq. then in the press.

This work was given to the public in 1780, in two quarto volumes of Memoirs and Appendix; a book of

* Vol. vii. pp. 271—350. † Advertisement p. 273. ‡ P. 321.

great magnificence, which may be justly regarded as a monument, not only to the munificent and patriotic virtues of that great patron of liberty and the arts, but as a splendid compliment to the memory of his favourite authors.

Among those worthies, none ranked higher in the estimation of Mr. Hollis, than the incomparable author of Paradise Lost. And Dr. Johnson's *New Narrative* of the poet's life, which appeared in 1779, being calculated to disparage Milton of the common-wealth, the prose-writer, Mr. B. undertook a vindication of his character and principles, under the name of *Remarks on Johnson's Life of Milton*, inserted in the Appendix to the Memoirs of T. H. pp. 533—584.

To give these *Remarks* the advantage of more general circulation, and a better chance of obviating the ill effects of the *New Narrative*, they were in the course of the year, reprinted separately in a small 12mo. for Dilly, intitled, *Remarks on Dr. Johnson's Life of Milton, to which are added, Milton's Tractate of Education, and Areopagitica.*

There is a passage in the close of these *Remarks* of which a garbled extract is given to the public, in Mr. Murphy's* Essay on the Life and Genius of Dr. Johnson, and which as it is there exhibited, seems almost to justify the harsh figures of reprobation employed by the ingenious but irritable essayist.†

In the year 1780, Mr. Joseph Berington, a Roman Catholic Priest, since known by his writings, published

* Page 184. † Vid. Appendix [G].

without his name a pamphlet intitled, ' The State and ' behaviour of English Catholics, from the Reformation ' to the year 1780.' In page 111. of this work, was the following passage:—" Dr. Blackburne, I think, a few " years back, made out an account [of the Papists, E.] " from a certain district in the North, with which he " was well acquainted, which was shamefully false."

An assertion which thus affected not only the Archdeacon of Cleveland's moral character, but that of a number of respectable clergymen, in an extensive district, ought certainly to have been the result of the most exact enquiry, and supported by the most indisputable evidence, or ought never to have been advanced at all.

It is somewhat curious, that the information of this matter, was given to Archdeacon Blackburne by Mr. Berington himself, in a letter dated 8th Jan. 1781; in which he avowed himself the author, quoted the above assertion, as having come to him from very respectable authority, but confessed, that since the time of writing, he had had some reasons to fear it might not be strictly true, and concluded with requesting the Archdeacon, ' *to inform him whether or not he was mistaken, in the* ' *fact he had charged him with,* that he might take the ' first opportunity in his next publication, of stating the ' error to the public.'

To such a request it is not easy to say what kind of a reply could be given: for certainly Mr. Berington presumed too far on the Archdeacon's acquaintance with the *Confessional* chair, if he supposed that he was accustomed to answer such interrogatories. Mr. Black-

burne took a more direct method of doing himself and the clergy of his Archdeaconry justice, by printing Mr. Berington's letter in the York Chronicle, and referring all whom it might concern, to the original returns in the hands of Mr. Brook, his Register, at York.

In the spring of the year 1781, Mr. B. composed a short tract, which he had seemingly intended for publication, under the title of, "Free Thoughts on the "Riots in June 1780, on the late act in favour of the "Papists, and on Mr. Burke's speech to the Citizens of "Bristol, when he declined the poll." In these thoughts there are some curious remarks, especially those on Mr. Burke's conduct, in contending for the continuance of a popish yoke, upon the necks of conscientious protestants in the case of the petitioning clergy, as contrasted with his pleading afterwards for the unlimited toleration of Popery upon Protestant principles. For the most part however, this tract appears to us calculated only to excite a temporary interest, and not sufficiently important for publication at present.

On the 23d June 1782, Dr. Thomas Blackburne Mr. B's second son, who from the period of his leaving the Charter-House School,* had declared for the profession

* 'My Carthusian is now dismissed from school, and I am put upon 'soliciting for him a Physic Studentship of the Tancred foundation. It 'is irksome to incur obligations from some of those people who have 'the disposal of that exhibition. It has however been attempted, and '*The Confessional* mentioned (though not to myself) as an obstruction to 'our success. I suppose the matter will go off upon that objection, 'though not *avowedly*. If that should be the case, it will be an honour 'and credit I would not sell for twice the emolument, which is 50l. per 'annum.'

F. B. to T. H. April 21, 1769.

of physic, died at Durham, in the exercise of that profession in the thirty third year of his age. The effect produced by this melancholy event on the feelings of his father, may be best conceived from the pious effusion of his sorrows above inserted p. 53, &c.

Mr. T. Blackburne when at the University of Cambridge, had taken an active part along with several young men of independent and liberal minds, in the petition presented by the undergraduates in December 1771, for relieving the candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Arts, from subscription to the xxxix Articles. And when in consequence of some intervening circumstances, the following declaration had been substituted in the place of such subscription, viz.—"I do "declare that I am, bonâ fide, a member of the church "of England,' as by law established,'—which might on the one hand be understood as a simple declaration of conformity to the established worship, or might be interpreted on the other as implying a premature approbation of the established doctrine; with a view to acquit his own conscience, and with the hopes of obtaining from the University an explicit avowal, in an ambiguity of so important a nature, Mr. T. Blackburne proposed the following most clear and unobjectionable formula to be subscribed by himself:—"I. T. B. do "hereby declare my full persuasion of the truth of the "Christian religion as exhibited in the scriptures, that "I have hitherto communicated with the established "church, and have no present intention of communica-"ting with any other." The result of this proposal most ingenuously but unsuccessfully offered, and the

estimation in which the proposer was justly held for his talents and virtues, as it was very happily expressed, at the time in an animated statement by his friend and tutor, may be seen in the valuable work referred to below.*

The death of a son whom Mr. B. so highly loved and esteemed, was not the only affliction which this year produced. The separation from the church of England, of his son in law Dr. Disney, for whom to the moment of his death he entertained and expressed the warmest cordiality of friendship, was an event to his mind peculiarly affecting. That secession, it is true, was the natural and honourable consequence of a settled conviction, (for which the worthy seceder, with a truly Christian candor, soon after delivered his reasons† to the public,) that he could no longer conscientiously minister in the form of worship prescribed by the church of England. Mr. Blackburne too had his objections to the liturgy and articles of the church; but he was far from going the length of dissent which his friend Mr. Lindsey had avowed in the year 1774, and which Dr. Disney now came forward to profess.——On a subject so delicate, and on an occasion of such serious difference with a person most eminently beloved and honoured by him, we might have been at a loss for language sufficiently proper and correct to express the feelings of Mr. B, had he not himself at the time committed to paper his motives for so differing, with

* Vid. Jebb's Works, vol. iii. pp. 221—232, as also vol. vii. of these works, p. 48, and p. 224. Note.

† 'Reasons for resigning the Rectory of Panton and Vicarage of Swinderby, and quitting the Church of England. 2d. Ed. 1783.

the design of immediate publication; a design suspended indeed during his life from considerations of tenderness and affection, and which is now only executed in compliance with one of his latest requests before his death. The fact was, that in strict agreement with his early resolution not to intermeddle with the Trinitarian controversy, Mr. B. had never been forward to introduce his own speculations on that topic to the public, or even among his private friends. But conscious that the world had been civil enough to impute to him and his principles the step which Mr. Lindsey had taken some years before; and now, on the secession of another near and dear relative, making no doubt but the same world would add the step then taken by him to the same account, Mr. B. did not chuse to lye under this redoubled imputation, and with a view therefore to exculpate himself, drew up the short paper referred to below, under the title of, *An Answer to the Question, Why are you not a Socinian?**

Nor were his apprehensions that his sentiments on this head might be misunderstood or misapprehended, without just foundation; as it seems to have been the current opinion both in conversation and in print, except among a few more intimately acquainted with his mode of thinking, that the faith of Archdeacon Blackburne, who did not deem it necessary to resign his preferments, was yet in perfect conformity with the creed of his friends, whose scruples of conscience had obliged them to relinquish theirs.

In the year 1783, notwithstanding his declining age,

* Vide Appendix [H].

our author was still employing his pen on the cause which ever lay nearest to his heart, the perfection of the protestant principle, and the reclaiming of the church of England especially, in all its aberrations from the great rule of that and of every Christian Society, the written word of God in the scriptures of the New Testament. This work though certainly left in too imperfect a state to appear from the press, abounds in remarks of acute and profound reflection, and is composed in the form of *Letters to a Friend on Ecclesiastical Reformation.* The motto altered with much felicity from Virgil,—

Tantæ molis erat Romanam *vincere* gentem,

aptly enough conveys our author's idea of the difficulty of rendering the work of reformation perfect. '*Tendimus* 'in Latium,' was the happy illustration of the same idea in his favorite Dr. Jortin.

In the course of the following year, 1784, Mr. B's. eye sight intirely failed him for all the purposes of writing and reading. From the close of this year to the time of his death, he was assisted in those functions by a young school boy,* whose services performed with fidelity and diligence, won him not only the esteem and affection, but the implicit confidence of his revered and venerable employer.

Early in the year 1785, a fifth Edition was published of Dean Comber's *Friendly and Seasonable Advice to the Roman Catholics of England*; a tract, the business of which is, 'to undeceive every one who has been 'misled to take the commandments of men for the 'doctrines and injunctions of divine revelation.'

* Now the Rev. J. Tate, M. A. Master of the Free Grammar School of Richmond.

For this edition, Mr. B. at the request of the editor, had composed a Preface of a few pages, written with the usual vigor of his understanding, on a subject which had frequently exercised his maturest faculties. And notwithstanding that abhorrence of the spirit and practices of popery, which had marked the very character of his life, even in his eightieth year, we reflect with complacency, his mind was open to admit the perfect toleration of the professors of it, on their solemn, sincere, and unreserved declaration of allegiance to the civil government, and disclaiming all obedience to the pope or church of Rome, except in matters purely spiritual. In short, his aversion was to popery, not to papists; and borrowing Dr. Johnson's *words on another occasion, one might say of Archdeacon Blackburne, that if he had met a papist, to whom a protestant was as a papist, that papist would have been as a protestant to him.†

In the year 1785, Mr. B. also printed a 'short Dis-'course on the subject of preaching,' delivered to the clergy of the Archdeaconry of Cleveland, in the year 1783. Todd. York. In this Discourse, the general obligation, the benefit to himself, the advantage to his hearers, of a clergyman's composing his own sermons, are topics urged with great good sense and considerable novelty. And we are only sorry, that the limited plan on which a regard to expedience hath obliged us to conduct the present publication of our author's works, should exclude this along with several other of his valuable charges of a practical nature.

* Vide, Murphy's Essay, p. 107. † Vide, Vol. i. pp. 115—16.

In the spring of 1786, Mr. Blackburne from a sense of increasing decay resigned the office of Commissioner, which he held under Mr. Eden (now Lord Auckland), then Commissary of the Archdeaconry of Richmond; an event no otherwise important, than as it introduced a successor, who 'vain of his little brief authority,' and ill qualified from education or habit to bear his faculties with that meekness, which in his case would have been singularly becoming, afforded a remarkable instance how unfit the Lay Proctor of a Prerogative Court must be to excercise ecclesiastical discipline over a body of learned and conscientious clergymen. The omission in the church service at Richmond, of a certain unedifying creed, as unscriptural in its language, as it is uncharitable in its spirit, was the great cause of offence to this zealous stickler for the orthodoxy of canons and rubrics. Surely it may be said the talents and virtues of a man like Mr. Blackburne, who for such a length of years had adorned the offices of Rector and Archdeacon by his dignified discharge of the duties of both, might have intitled him to too much respect,—at any rate his venerable age and many infirmities ought to have insured him too much humanity, to be selected as the first object of invidious reprehension, and that too by a person whom Mr. B. had done every thing in his power to oblige and accommodate in the entrance of his office.

The same zeal and perseverance with which Mr. B. had administered the different provinces of his duty in the church during the more active periods of his life, were in the declining days of his last year (1787) equally apparent. At an early season of his parochial labours,

he had printed and dispersed among his parishioners a close and affecting appeal on the *nature, obligations and benefits of Family Religion;* and ever mindful of the immediate occasions of his flock, now that he was no longer able to address them from the pulpit, he adopted again the communication of the press, and bequeathed as it were his last legacy to them in, *An Exhortation to the due attendance upon Public Worship,* a Sermon several times preached in the Parish Church, at Richmond, *by Francis Blackburne, A. M. Minister of the Parish.* Richmond. King. 1787.

The summer of this year brought with it the 38th return of the Archdeacon's annual visitation in Cleveland, for which purpose he had prepared a Charge suggested by the solemn obtestation of Paul to Timothy, *to preach the word, to be instant in season, out of season, to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine.**

This Charge was delivered for him by his eldest son standing at his side, and ended with the following pious and affectionate farewell. 'And now, my Reverend 'Brethren, as I can hardly promise myself at my time 'of life, to be able to meet you any more upon a like 'occasion, I take this opportunity to express my grate-'ful acknowledgements for the great candor, and the 'many civilities I have met with among you. For the 'rest, in whatever state and condition I may be, while I 'have the powers of reflection, you may depend upon 'my prayers for the success of your ministry in the gos-'pel, in proportion to the importance of the object of 'your endeavours; and my best wishes that you may

* 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

'enjoy all the prosperity in this life, which is consistent with the hope and attainment of the felicities of a better.'

After going through the circle of his visitations, he was taken ill at the house of his friend and kinsman the Rev. William Comber, Vicar of Kirbymoor side; and apprehensive of approaching dissolution, he was anxious to return home, and accordingly travelled with all the expedition which he could sustain to the Rectory at Richmond.

The fatigue of this last effort of conscientious duty he did not many weeks survive; and on the morning of August 7th in his 83d year, closing the long scene of a studious, regular, and religious life with the sentiment of the amiable Erasmus and the benevolent Jortin, "I have had enough of every thing in this world," without a groan, and as he sat in his chair, he literally fell asleep, in the humble hope of a blessed resurrection to a better world.*

It now remains to delineate, at least in some of its most prominent features, the character of this excellent man. Few divines perhaps of the church of England during

* Mr. Blackburne left a widow, (who died 20th August, 1799, and was buried in the same grave,) and four children: Jane, married to the Rev. Dr. Disney, now minister of the Unitarian Society in Essex Street, London; the Rev. Francis Blackburne, Vicar of Brignal, near Greta-Bridge, Yorkshire; Sarah, married to the Rev. John Hall, Vicar of Chew Magna, and Rector of Dundry, in Somersetshire; and William Blackburne, M. D. of Cavendish Square, London.

the 18th Century possessed a stronger or more deeply rooted conviction of the truth, necessity, and importance of the Christian religion than Archdeacon Blackburne. In his studies, in his preaching, in his morality, this was the predominant and vital principle. He left to others of his profession the secular pursuits of ambition and preferment, the recommendation of pagan virtues from the pulpit, or the exaltation of pagan metaphysics from the press. For himself, as a Christian minister, he proved, defended, and taught religion in its original, its obligations, its present benefits and its future rewards, from the Bible* only; nor did he ever, as a public man, forsake the paths of truth and liberty to seek his bread or his applause elsewhere.

The principles of the sufficiency of scripture for salvation, and the indefeasible right of private judgment in the interpretation of it, on which alone the reformation from popery can be justified, no writer, perhaps, ever more clearly understood, or more consistently vindicated than the Author of *The Confessional.* In respect to human *Confessions of faith and doctrine,* especially *in protestant churches,* 'Upon the most serious enquiry, 'carried on for a long time, he was convinced, that 'the whole affair of subscription was a *mystery of iniquity,* which deserved to be thoroughly exposed; and 'his purpose was to lay it open in such sort as to convince all reasonable men, that they might not be deluded by specious colours in an affair of that magnitude, and transacted with that solemnity before God 'and man.'†

* Vide Vol. i. p. 170.

† F. B. Letter to a Friend. 11th Feb. 1756.

Of Popery in its corruptions and superstitions, or in its intolerant dominion over conscience, he was the vigilant and determined foe. He had twice witnessed in the good people of these realms that alarm for their civil and religious liberties, which the imminent danger of the protestant succession in the House of Hanover from the infatuated partisans of a Popish prince, had repeatedly excited. And to the impressions which these events had stamped upon his mind, but still more to the persuasion which he cherished, that the growth of Popery in a free country was proportionally injurious to the cause of freedom both in church and state, must be attributed that dread of the increase of Roman Catholics in this kingdom, and that zeal to prevent their increase, which some genuine friends of the rights of mankind may yet think that he extended too far or maintained too long.

Nor was it Popery as embodied in the Church of Rome only, that exercised his abhorrence and opposition. In whatever church the spirit of that seet shewed itself in tendencies to the like narrowness, bigotry and persecution; or wherever the pious but still imperfect reformers, had left uncleared away any remnants of the *wood and stubble of man's work built on the foundation of Jesus Christ*; there was he still found at his post the zealous and consistent protestant.

He was far indeed from thinking other Christian societies of the reformed faith free from defects and blemishes in their respective establishments. But it was for the *true* reputation and honor of the church of England,* that he felt more particular concern. The com-

* For the *reverence* and *affection* which he bore to the church of Eng-

pliments so often paid to her *purity* and *perfection* might naturally enough proceed from the flatterers of her vanity, or the expectants of her favour; too honest for the one character and too independent for the other, he, like a real friend, instead of encouraging her to acquiesce in the panegyric of Mosheim, shewed her the way to atchieve it, and to become in *fact* as well as in *title*, the *leader and chief of all the reformed Churches.**

He recommended as her great guiding maxim, that the farther she removed from the doctrine and discipline of Rome, the stronger her foundations would be as an evangelical church, and that she *need* not either borrow or copy one circumstance in her constitution from the creeds, rituals, or ordinances of the popish system; for that the New Testament would supply her with every thing of that kind which she could want, for the faith, the worship, or the government of a christian church.†

When he was called upon to be more explicit in his demands as a reformer, he declared the distinct object of his wishes to be 'An ecclesiastical constitution calculated to comprehend all that hold the fixed and fundamental principles and points of faith, in which all serious and sincere protestants of every denomination are unanimously agreed, and to exclude those only that hold the peculiar tenets that ESSENTIALLY distinguish all true protestantism from popery;' and that to the establishment of *this* ecclesiastical constitu-

land, vide vol. i. p. 199, in his third reason for continuing to minister in it; notwithstanding some things which he could not approve.

* Vide, Vol. v, pp. 74, 5, 6. † Vide, Vol. iii. p. 5.

tion the author of *The Confessional* never would be an enemy.*

Indeed he very early discovered the whole scope of his views and wishes when he desired to see his favourite definition from Bishop Kennet verified, that the Church of England might be—A SCRIPTURAL INSTITUTION *on a* LEGAL ESTABLISHMENT.†

Nor yet did he suffer this zeal and these labours in the cause of ecclesiastical reformation to intrench on the performance of his public offices as Archdeacon and Rector; but regularly devoting a great and just portion of his extraordinary vigour of mind to the call of those duties, he thus spent near half a century of his life, as the faithful friend and indefatigable servant of the church of England, in every good purpose of christian edification.

As Rector of the parish of Richmond, during the first twenty years of his incumbency, he composed an original sermon every week for the instruction of his flock; nor ever failed afterwards when a fresh occasion gave him the advantage, to introduce new variety and interest into his addresses from the pulpit. Added to all this, his person was commanding and venerable, his manner firm, animated and sincere, his voice clear and penetrating, and all his tones like himself, natural and unaffected. Gifted with these powers, speaking as he felt, and preaching what from his heart he believed, it is no wonder that his eloquence arrested, as his reasoning convinced all who heard him.

* Vide, Vol. v, p. 7. † Vide, Vol. i. p. 163.

In the discharge of his duties as Archdeacon of Cleveland, to which for fifteen of the last years of his life, the similar labour of visiting annually the three Yorkshire Deaneries in the Archdeaconry of Richmond was superadded, he never once neglected in either capacity to direct the attention of his reverend brethren to the important ends of their calling as ministers of the gospel of Christ.

Very far from passing over at their proper time, and in their due proportion, the concerns 'of external order 'and discipline,' the argument of his charges was principally confined to 'the weightier matters of the law.' —The study of the scriptures; the state of the Controversy between the Protestants and Papists; the duty of a Christian Minister under a National Establishment; the Questions,—What Christianity is, and where it is to be learned; the *true* Interests of Religion; the Original Principles of the first Protestants; the absolute necessity of an Evangelical Virtue in the Pastoral Office; the method to render Public Preaching impressive and edifying;—these, and such as these were the topics, which he selected for the subject of his discourses, all resulting from a thorough knowledge of every department of his arduous province as Archdeacon in a Protestant Church, and all immediately conducive to the instruction and improvement of a protestant clergy.

What lent singular weight and authority to his solemn admonitions to his parishioners, as well as to his brethren in the ministry, was the close and even rigid adherence in his own conduct to the great principles of duty which he had occasion to enforce on the minds

of those whom he addressed. Uninfected with avarice or with ambition, 'that last disease of serious minds,' regulating his private life by the strict maxims of gospel morality, being the resident minister of one parish, and performing personally all the duties of his public station, he was raised above 'that main hindrance of a 'minister's exercising his functions with effect, to preach 'what he does not practice.'* There were therefore few articles of obligation that it might be necessary to inculcate on his parish or on his clergy, which either timidity or shame could restrain him from pursuing in the plainest language, and with the utmost freedom and honesty of exhortation.

With a professional character thus respectable and respected for talent, uprightness and sedulity, as a minister and dignitary of the church of England, Mr. Blackburne was singularlarly intitled to stand forward as an ecclesiastical reformer: and of his high, and, in these times, perhaps unequalled fame in that honourable, however obnoxious undertaking, his personal independence built on the groundwork of a retired, temperate and and frugal life, was the basis and ornament. At an early period of his labours as a writer, he had settled it with himself, never to subscribe the XXXIX articles again for any advancement in the church. Impregnable therefore to the common influences of hope and fear, he was enabled to 'steer right onward' in the prosecution of his 'noble task.'

The refusal indeed of the considerable preferment

* Charge. 1776. p. 17.

alluded to in the Memoirs,* in the first instance, and not long after that the circumstance of a living obtained for a friend by his interest, of twice the value of his own other preferments, and tenable along with them, are not the only facts which may be produced in proof how dearly he prized his integrity. The clear amount of all that he possessed, as a beneficed clergyman, never much exceeded the sum of an hundred and fifty pounds a year; twenty pounds of which, the profits of his prebend, were annually set apart for the increase of his library.

What other and weightier considerations determined Mr. Blackburne to 'continue to minister in the church 'while he disapproved many things in her doctrine and 'discipline,' he has stated for himself in a very explicit and satisfactory manner, on an occasion which seemed to him to demand the avowal of his motives for such continuance. The mere pittance of income which he enjoyed under the national establishment, it was barely possible for an illiberal mind to allege as sufficiently accounting for his conduct in that respect. It will not hereafter be in the power of any adversary of Archdeacon Blackburne's sentiments as a reformer to mistake or misrepresent his principles on this point, when the following facts are laid before the public.

The Confessional was first published early in the year 1766, and it was not long, before the secret of the author's name transpired. In the course of that year Dr. Chandler, minister of the dissenting congregation in the old Jewry, London, died, and several of the principal members of that society, being persuaded that the

* Page xxxi.

author of *The Confessional* was inclined to quit the church and join the dissenters, conveyed by a confidential person to Mr. Blackburne their wish to be informed, 'How far his inclinations went that way, and 'whether he would accept the situation of their minis-'ter then vacant.' To this enquiry and the proposal connected with it, Mr. B. transmitted his answer through the same channel. We should have great pleasure in giving so important a document to the reader at full length, but it has hitherto eluded every search which has been made to discover it. Briefly however, we can state thus much, that a direct negative was returned by Mr. B. to the application; and as appears from the reply, the reasons for 'his negative carried their own con-'viction along with them, and were very satisfactory to 'those who set the inquiry a foot.'

Thus then the offer of a station of the first eminence and celebrity amongst the nonconformists, with a revenue of at least four hundred pounds a year, was rejected by a man, who at all times held out the right hand of fellowship to a Protestant dissenter, and who in the situation proposed would certainly have been relieved from some grievances in the exercise of his Christian liberty, which the national establishment imposed upon him. And such then was the pure and disinterested attachment of Archdeacon Blackburne, to the church of England, such his affectionate and peculiar zeal for her best interests, and such his claim to be ranked with the most faithful of her servants, if she be desirous to become more and more what she affects to be thought, a gospel

institution established by law for the edification of a Christian people.

Mr. Blackburne's attachment to the principles of civil and religious liberty, as it commenced at a very early, so it continued to the very latest period of his life, unabated on every honest occasion, which he could embrace of serving that cause either by his pen or by his personal influence. His own account in his memoirs of the rise of that attachment we have been happy enough to illustrate by some curious anecdotes from his private letters;* which certainly present, as it hath been well remarked, a striking instance of the effect of single circumstances in sometimes giving a direction to the whole of future life.

Some of Mr. Blackburne's more peculiar and characteristic opinions as a divine, we are inclined to believe, may be traced to his early intimacy and correspondence with his learned and excellent friend Edmund Law. With the translator of Archbishop King's Essay on the Origin of Evil, he had learned to reject Dr. Clarke's theory of the eternal relations, and fitnesses of things, and along with that his demonstration *a priori* of the moral attributes of God. The enquiries arising from speculations like these, Mr. Blackburne appears at one time to have pursued with the most serious and diligent application of all the powers of his mind; and the conviction resulting from the whole we find thus expressed in his own strong language in a Letter to a friend: 'It 'is impossible there should be any religion in the world 'without positive declarations of the divine will, and

* Pp. iv, v, Notes.

'actual information, by prophecy or otherwise, concerning the divine nature and perfections.'

The general doctrine of Dr. Law's celebrated Appendix, on the meaning of the term *Soul*, and on the state of death described in Holy Scripture, Mr. B. had certainly adopted several years before that Appendix appeared. But it is equally certain, that for many years after his first settlement at Richmond, he had held a regular correspondence, as well as enjoyed frequent opportunities of conversation with Dr. Law, on that and other topics of religious concern.

The real importance of the controversy on the sleep of the Soul, and the support which the unscriptural notions of its natural immortality and separate existence after death afford to Deism and Popery, Mr. Blackburne has very ably shewn in the *Prefatory Discourse* to his *Historical View*.* That Discourse indeed is written in such an animated strain of argument, and exhibits such a forcible plea for the freedom of religious inquiry, as beneficial to the interests of truth in other departments of literature and science, that whoever wishes to appreciate *the use and importance of theological controversy* in general, as well as of the particular controversy occasioned by Dr. Law's Appendix, will find himself amply rewarded for the time and attention bestowed on the perusal of that very instructive and entertaining Essay.

Without ever taking an active part in the disputes which in his time agitated and are still agitating the

* Vol. iii. pp. 7—50.

church of England on the article of Predestination, it is certain that Mr. B. was, in the general sentiments of his creed, what he more than once declared himself to be, a moderate Calvinist; and his writings place it beyond a doubt, that he believed himself so much more a Protestant for being so.* His Calvinism however, was of the largest and most liberal cast. This will be easily understood, from what he thought of the great work of David Hartley on Man;—'a book,' writes Mr. B. to a friend in 1750, 'to which, if I am not exceedingly mistaken, Christianity is or will be more beholden, than 'to all the books besides of the two last centuries.— 'But he has joined *Necessity* and *Religion* together,— 'What of that. Ask the church of England in her 'Articles.'

While engaged in the controversial field, and maintaining what he believed to be the cause of truth and liberty, Mr. Blackburne, like his admired Luther, pursued his adversary often with vehemence, and sometimes with asperity of attack: and when either rank or eminence in the object of his animadversion was likely to lend a sanction to prejudice and superstition, or to give an imposing air to the encroachments of human authority in matters of religion, no writer ever more intrepidly encountered odium by exposing error and bigotry if it were even found, where many good and gentle natures will hardly allow it to be looked for, under the lawn and the mitre. Yet doubtless in the execution of so critical an office, the most acute and

* Vid. Vol. v. pp. 416, 417, &c.

honest judgment might at times fail in discernment, or carry severity too far. To say therefore that Mr. Blackburne never passed an unjust censure, or harboured an unworthy dislike as a polemic, would be to suppose that he was perfect in the most difficult of all tasks; the task of inquiring into the justness of argument, the integrity of motives, and the rectitude of conduct, of other men like himself.

Of all this, in his last years especially, when he had retired from the business of controversy, and looked back on the scene which he had quitted for ever, Mr. Blackburne was duly sensible; and one day a few weeks before his death, conversing with a lady then resident at Richmond, one of the most amiable and excellent of her sex, he acknowledged with great earnestness, that some things which he had written and published in the course of his life, he was afraid, might have been too warmly, or too hastily advanced. Yet no scholar perhaps was ever more industrious and indefatigable in the investigation both of facts and of arguments, or less precipitate in delivering his researches to the public than Archdeacon Blackburne.

Nor did mere difference of opinion even on points of the highest political and religious consequence, or on speculative topics where years of study had endeared conviction to him, operate as a bar to his approbation of the merits of his opponent; and he readily acknowledged, and admired literary talent and scriptural knowledge, or clear and able enforcements of the truths and obligations of religion, as well as personal virtue and eminent piety, in those, from whom otherwise he

differed widely, and whom with no little eagerness he had sometimes opposed.

Mr. Blackburne's cordial and eloquent compliment to the memory of Jortin,* to whom besides some specific disagreements, he was nearly as dissimilar in general character as Luther to Erasmus, has been more than once repeated in print. His amanuensis testifies the genuine satisfaction which the reading of Dr. Johnson's Prayers and Meditations, tinctured as they are with superstitious littleness, appeared to afford his venerable friend; and he well remembers with what delight Mr. Blackburne listened to the sermons of Bishop Sherlock, which he had doubtless often himself perused before, and with what frankness of heart he wished, that it had been in his power to be equally useful as a preacher of the doctrines of Christianity.

Amidst the calls of his public station, and the labours of private study,† during the most active stages of his life, Mr. Blackburne had been always constant in the regular performance of family devotion, and of solitary prayer. The contemplation too of some passage in the Old or New Testament, with the comments of the best early or later critics was not forgotten in the habitual arrangement of his forenoon.* In his latter days, these exercises and meditations, and a course of reading con-

* Vid. Vol. iii. p. 333.

† 'Very few are the moments I have had to myself, since the spring 'came in, and half the day's application, when I have, makes me very 'glad of a little relaxation in the latter part of it. I could once have sate 'twelve hours to business without much fatigue. Those days are gone, 'and half the time is now a full dose.'

F. B. to Thomas Hollis, 25 July. 1769.

genial to them, suited particularly well with the sober and serious cast of a mind like his, and with affections fast weaning off to a better world. Towards the close of his life, retaining strong faculties of memory and intellect, his powers of cheerful and instructive conversation were little diminished by age; or what they had lost, if any thing they had lost, in vigor, was abundantly compensated in that soft mellowness of temper, which like the mild setting sun of an autumnal evening, gilds the declining day of a wise and virtuous old man.

Such was Francis Blackburne; a believer of Christianity from the deepest conviction of its truth; a protestant on the genuine principles of the reformation from Popery; a strenuous adversary of superstition and intolerance, and of every corruption of the simplicity or the spirit of the gospel; a zealous promoter of civil liberty; a close and perspicacious reasoner; a keen and energetic writer; an attentive, benevolent, and venerable Archdeacon; an eloquent and persuasive Preacher; a faithful Pastor and exemplary guide; of unblemished purity of life, of simple dignity of manners; a sincere and cordial friend; an affectionate husband, and an indulgent father; in short, a just, humane, pious, temperate and independent man.

APPENDIX.

PAGE xix. [A].

In the year 1786 Dr. Hallifax, then Bishop of Gloucester, republished the Charge above mentioned with some remarks intended to vindicate the author, Bishop Butler, from the imputation of popery; which remarks in a later edition of the *Analogy* he enlarged with some account of the controversy on that subject in the year 1767.

Dr. Hallifax had on a certain occasion (in 1772) avowed the greatest respect for the character and abilities of Archdeacon Blackburne, and the highest opinion both of his sincerity and services in the cause of truth. We now find him attacking the Author of the *Serious Enquiry* with very little either of openness or candor, and fastening upon him the credit or discredit of a certain Letter from Newcastle signed *Old Martin* (in 1767) on no other ground whatever than that of its *rancour, malignity*, and *virulence*.

In justice to the memory of Mr. Blackburne we think it right to state, that the first imputation on the character of Bishop Butler seems to have originated with the Author of the *Root of Protestant Errors examined*, early in the year 1767; as the controversy in the public prints was opened by Archbishop Secker under the title of *Misopseudes*, May 9th of that year, who entering the lists of an anonymous dispute in a public Newspaper, could not expect either unqualified credit to his assertions or implicit deference to his authority.

All the part which with any certainty we can assign to Mr. Blackburne in this affair, consists of one or two

Letters, in which the writer considering it as a question too late to be decided by proofs in what communion Bishop Butler might have died, expressly attacks him for laying much too great a stress upon natural religion; asserts with very good grounds for his opinion, that the Bishop's forte did not lye in scriptural theology; and finally asks, of what signification it was, that Laud, Wake, and Butler did not make a *formal* profession of popery, when each of them had left such glaring proofs of their being possessed with the genuine *spirit* of it.

That the impression however remained on the minds of some persons of high rank in the church, is indisputable. An occasional correspondent of Archdeacon Blackburne's, after speaking of other strange matters of a theological kind which had lately occurred, goes on thus of his own suggestion.

'But every thing and every body surprises one. A 'Bishop told me, Butler died a papist: which though 'I do not believe; yet I should as little have believed, 'a week before he delivered it, that he could compose 'the Charge printed as given at Durham: though I 'thought not quite of his Lordship, as many did; ha-'ving seen long before at Bristol some proofs of his Al-'titudinarianism and of something else at Rochester; 'which prepared me in a degree for this last.'*

To the notes which Bishop Hallifax has subjoined to the charge, in defence of the obnoxious passages in it against the attack of the *Serious Enquiry*, we do not judge any regular answer to be at all necessary. Suffice it to remark, that if an eminent prelate in a reformed church could in very loose terms recommend *the importance of externals* as one way of reviving a practical sense of religion among the people, and by such recommendation afford triumph as he did to the professors of a corrupted Christianity, it was not consistent with the protestant zeal of our author to allow a scandal of that kind to pass without its due share of salutary reprehen-

* Dr. S. Salter of the Charter House to F. B. Norwich, 22 June, 1769.

sion. For the other point discussed in these notes of Bishop Hallifax, we shall content ourselves for the present with assuring our readers, that it was no light or hasty dislike which Mr. Blackburne conceived to certain fashionable doctrines of *the law of nature:* it was his settled belief after years of the most attentive study bestowed on this most important and interesting subject, 'that Bishop Butler had so besated himself with 'abstract notions of natural religion, as to leave revela-'tion no higher office than that of holding the candle 'to it.'

It is worth the while to observe, that Bishop Hallifax himself in his Preface to the *Analogy*, §. 1. instead of demonstrating the *importance of external religion* from the scriptures of the New Testament, the *only avowed* rule of faith and practice in this case among protestant divines, rests his leading argument on certain metaphysical speculations of his own about the *compound nature of man*, as *consisting of body and mind.* For, *'the many cere-'monies in use among the Jews in consequence of a divine 'command,'* having been cancelled on the cross nearly two thousand years ago, are with a very ill grace brought up by a Christian prelate at this day, to prove, *'that 'external religion is as much enjoined, and constitutes as 'real a part of revelation, as that which is internal.'* Had the Bishop forgot, or need his admirers be reminded, of that very intelligible declaration of our common master, John iv. 23, 24. 'The hour cometh, and now 'is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father 'in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to 'worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship 'him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.'

It is true, that for proofs of the *importance of external religion,* Bishop Hallifax does also appeal to the two Christian ordinances, 'the baptism of water as an em-'blem of moral purity, and the eating and drinking of 'bread and wine as symbols and representations of the 'body and blood of Christ.' And so far as the defence of those ceremonies in a Christian church is concerned, so far is an appeal to the word of God conclusive and

final. But if Bishop Hallifax or any other Protestant divine, on the foundation of these, the only two ordinances of Christ's own institution, should build a system of human externals, and dignify it with the sacred title of '*a real part of revelation*;' it might be very difficult in that case to demonstrate, that professed Papists alone are intitled to succeed the Pharisees as the objects of that solemn denunciation of Christ,—'In vain do they 'worship me, teaching for doctrines the command-'ments of men.'

Page xxvi [B.]

These *Sentiments of a Country Divine concerning the Ordinance of Baptism* are drawn up with a closeness of argument and freedom of enquiry truly characteristic of our Author's constitution of mind. The great scope and drift of what he has written on this subject, is all that we profess to give the reader. The incidental reflections arising from the controversy, as well as the minuter points of demonstration or defence, are many of them admirable, but too intimately connected with the rest of the composition to be exhibited with advantage in a separate extract. To proceed to the purpose.

Very early in the correspondence of Bishop Clayton and Mr. William Penn, there occurs a difficulty in which both the disputants are equally concerned, and which ought to have been clearly and satisfactorily settled, before they had stirred one step farther.

In the text of St. Matthew xxviii. 19, as usually read and interpreted—*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; our Lord prescribes *one* precise form of words to be used in baptism. The Apostles appear, from the Acts and Epistles, to have used *another*: and the Evangelists, Mark, Luke, and John, do *not* mention *any precise* form whatever.

Here then is the difficulty, to account for this deviation from the authentic form. And various schemes

have been proposed for reconciling the practice of the Apostles to the precept of Christ.

The authorities produced by *Grotius*, in locum, come too late in the history of the Church to ascertain the practice of the Apostles at all. Professor *Limborch*, (in the face of the Apostolic usage, which was always to baptise in the name of JESUS *alone*, with no other variation than that of his title, as *Jesus Christ*, the *Lord Jesus* &c.) proceeds on the supposition, that *no certain form* was ever used by the Apostles. Dr. *Lightfoot* and after him Dr. *Whitby* invent a distinction for which there is not the least shadow in the scriptures, of *one* form of baptism for the *Jewish* and *another* for the *Gentile* converts. Bishop *Clayton* contends, that the Apostles (who baptised in the name of JESUS *alone*) actually used the form prescribed by our Lord (*in the name of the Father, and of the* SON, *and of the Holy Ghost:*) and this he does, first, upon a supposition which the matter of fact will not admit of, that St. Luke in the Acts gave the SUBSTANCE of the form in Matthew, and did *not think it necessary* to set down the *precise words* of it; and next upon a mistaken interpretation of the question of St. Paul, Acts xix. 1—3. who did not mean to ask, by what *form of words* the Ephesians had been baptised, but into what name or into what *baptism*, of *John*, or of *Jesus*.

Having exposed the insufficiency of these several hypotheses, our Author thus states the difficulty of the case, as it would appear to a plain man on the face of the scriptures.

" Here is a Form of Baptism prescribed *Matthew* " xxviii, in express words, and the very next words to " these contain an injunction to the Apostles, to *teach* " *all nations to observe whatsoever* Jesus *had comman-* " *ded them*: that is to say, whatever *Jesus* had comman- " ded the Apostles themselves to observe.

" From this history of our Saviour, I go on to that of " the Apostles; and here no sooner do they begin to " execute their commission, than I find them bapti- " sing their converts by *another* form of words, *different*

" from that commanded by *Christ*. Of this I find four " or five distinct instances in this history of their *Acts* ; " and in their Epistles, two, if not more, plain intima- " tions of it. But nothing in the whole *New Testa-* " *ment* to prove, or even to imply, that they ever made " use of the form mentioned by St. Matthew."

Mr. Blackburne's solution of the difficulty thus plainly stated, is at once bold, direct, and decisive, and remarkable for that simplicity which so often surprises us at the developement of some original truth, only wondered at because it was no sooner discovered. But let our Author speak for himself.

After all, ' Is it clear and indisputable that the words, ' in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the ' Holy Ghost, as they stand in *St. Matthew's* Gospel, ' are the precise baptismal form of words prescribed by ' our Saviour, or indeed that they relate immediately to ' Baptism at all ?

' Be not surprised, dear Sir ; I am now speaking out ' what I only remotely and obscurely hinted at in our ' late conference. I own the long use of this form in ' our Christian Churches has made it venerable ; and I ' shall not wonder that multitudes (besides yourself) ' should discover the utmost reluctance to part with it. But ' however, certain it is that better Christians than any of ' us have used *another* form in Baptism. And if it can ' be made appear, or at least rendered highly probable ' by a natural and easy construction of this passage in ' St. *Matthew*, considered along with the testimony of ' St. *Luke*, that the words in question contain no bap- ' tismal form at all, I suppose you will (I am sure you ' ought to) agree with me, that we should rather follow ' the apostolical form in *Acts*, as being derived to us ' by the authority and example of men, who must be ' perfectly satisfied that the foundation they built upon ' was sound and good.

' Suppose then we should read the passage in St ' *Matthew* thus, Πορευθεντες 'αν μαθητευσατε παντα τα' εθ ' (βαπτιζοντες 'αυτους) 'εις το 'ονομα του Πατρος και του υιου, και τ

'Πνευματος 'αγιω. *Go ye therefore and disciple all nations (baptising them) into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.*

'Here you see is not a single tittle altered in the text of the Evangelist save in the pointing; and yet a very material alteration of the sense of the passage obtained, which makes the two Evangelists perfectly consistent with each other. For as the passage stands above, explained by the parenthesis, the command to baptise refers to no particular form at all, and leaves us to suppose, what was certainly the truth of the matter, that the Apostles being already well acquainted with the form used in the baptism of *Jesus*, it was quite superfluous to enjoin it here.

'St. *John* tells us expressly, *Chap.* iv 2. that the disciples of JESUS made and *baptised* other disciples to their master, and these not a few. This is a sufficient proof without any other, that the Apostles of *Christ* were well versed in the form of Baptism prescribed by our Saviour for such as should be converted to the Christian Faith; upon which account the repetition of it in this solemn manner is one of the last things one would look for in this particular passage.'

Page xxxiii [C.]

Dr. Law was the only person who knew of *The Confessional* for some years, and indeed actually suggested the title of it while the work was yet in embryo, at least *ten* or *eleven* years before its publication.*

When the book was first in the printer's hands, a curious scruple occurred in respect to the title page. "The "word *Confessional*, conveys to Mr. Bowyer and me a "very different idea from what it does to you. It is a popish idea it conveys to us, and I fancy will to most "people. Dr. Lowth is here, and I resolve to ask his "opinion in confidence: he is a great admirer of yours,

* Vide, Vol. vi. pp. 113, 114.

" but I have not told him a word of this nor shall I. Mr. " B. and I had settled the Title just as you first drew it " up, only leaving the word *Confessional* out, but I am " satisfied I shall be in London before the Title is " printed."

Andrew Millar, to F. B. Bath, 17th December 1765.

It was this objection probably which gave rise to our Author's Jeu d'esprit of *Lotharío**, in an humorous contrast betwixt what was really found, and what might have been fairly expected by a 'gallant and gay' young man, in a book with so promising a name. That the term *Confessional* however, was not quite spoiled by our author's use of it for the purposes of romance, is evident from the novel of the *Italians;* or *the Confessional of the Black Penitents*, advertised in the year 1797, which from the singularity of its title, had it appeared thirty years before, would have been considered as of an equivocal at least, if not of an alarming tendency.

Amongst the letters of compliment to the Author of *The Confessional*, mentiontd in the Memoirs, we were particularly gratified with the following acute and comprehensive remarks occurring from the pen of the late excellent Dr. Heberden.† 'No subscriptions can bind 'the profligate: the cunning with their loose casuistry 'will elude, and enthusiasts will misinterpret them. Who 'are then the people whom they are likely to keep out 'of any communion of Christians? None certainly, 'but the honest and conscientious: and needs any 'church be afraid of being hurt by such doctrines as 'an honest enquirer thinks he finds in the scriptures?

'Confessions and Subscriptions were intended, as 'we will suppose, to guard and preserve religious truths; 'but whatever hinders, as these must do, a fair examina-'tion of any opinions, will never fail to have a con-

* Vide Letters and Essays. Vol. ii. pp. 223.

† Vide also the extract from Toplady's *Church of England vindicated from the charge of Arminianism*, in vol. v. p. 419. Note.

'trary effect, and prove the great means of preserving 'prejudice and error.'

To Dr. Heberden's merits as an active friend of religious liberty, Dr. Law on a subsequent occasion bears this handsome testimony. 'Oxford, [Bp. Lowth, E.] 'inquired whether your Charges were published. That 'question I could not resolve, but offered to lend him 'them when they were returned from Ely, where they 'were last and are now, with a worthy liberal layman, 'Dr. Heberden, who does more service to the cause 'than all our bench, though some have offered to con-'fer with me very freely upon such subjects.'

Bishop Law to F. B. March 4th, 1775.

The following extract of a Letter to Dr. Furneaux from a friend of his at Rotterdam in 1770, will shew the reception which *The Confessional* experienced in Holland. "The *Translation* of *The Confessional* into "*Dutch* hath given rise to a controversy here of the "same kind with that excited in England by that ce-"lebrated work. Some eminent Theological Profes-"sors at Leyden and Groningen are its zealous defen-"ders, and the Dutch established clergy, almost to a "man, are as zealous in opposing; so pleased are they "with the chains of their church. But notwithstand-"ing the opposition made to the work and its defenders, "it bids fair to promote a liberal spirit on this side the "water, especially among the laity, who begin to "speak in very broad terms of the duplicity and in-"sincerity of their clergy in subscribing and contending "for articles which they do not in many points seem "to believe."

A translation of this work into the French language, also was proposed, and is mentioned in a letter from Mr. Blackburne to Mr. Bowyer, December 23, 1766.

'A correspondent I have *abroad*, mentioned to me 'not long ago, a design to put *The Confessional* into a '*French* dress; in which he, with some other of his 'friends, as he said, were concerned. I have prevailed 'with him to drop the design, at least till another edi-

'tion come out. He is a man of great knowledge, 'though young; and capable of doing justice to any 'subject he thinks fit to undertake, and ought not to 'be employed in the drudgery of *translating*.'

Nichols's Anecdotes of Mr. Bowyer, p. 379.

We cannot conclude this miscellaneous article of Appendix more happily, than with the author of *The Confessional's* acknowledgment of his obligations to Mr. Hollis, for his patronage of that work.

Richmond, July 25, 1766.

'*Malleus Iconoclastes*, has been much too tardy in 'acknowledging with his own hand, the many, the 'very many instances of bounty and benevolence he 'hath experienced from an ever-to-be-honoured AS-'SERTOR OF LIBERTY. He can give himself no 'substantial reason, why this little pittance of gratitude 'should have been delayed so long, much less why it 'should be delayed any longer. The compliment which 'accompanied the elegant copy of the invaluable *Let-'ters on Toleration*, (which their weight in diamonds 'should not purchase from the obliged Receiver) is he 'fears the effect of too partial a friendship for a writer, 'who never yet could pretend to soar above mediocrity, 'and hath at least, been oftener below the line, than 'above it. His disinterested attachment to the best 'of causes, that of civil and religious liberty, is his 'greatest merit. In this his conscious heart glories. 'And when it is in any man's power to take this *glory-'ing* from him, he must submit to what he must think 'one of the greatest misfortunes, the loss of the esteem 'of the man in the world, with whom he would desire 'to preserve it:——*The Man in the World*, whom at 'one period of his life he never hoped to meet with, or 'even to hear of.

'*The Confessional*, if endued with sensibility, would 'smile at its decorations so much above its quality. It 'had indeed never seen the light, but for the bounteous 'hand which hath, since its appearance, contributed

'so largely to its support, and maintenance in the 'world. For this the author can safely appeal to a 'friend, who partakes of his inmost sentiments and counsels on all occasions, and who introduced it to the 'notice of its most worthy patron. It is high time 'this distinguished patronage, of an obscure, and, in 'literary matters, almost friendless writer should be 'acknowledged, as it is here, with the deepest sense of 'gratitude.

'May life, health, safety, and the means of doing 'good, be long continued to the faithful servant of the 'giver of all good, who is so assiduous in the applica- 'tion of them to the noblest purposes. May his feli- 'cities be multiplied in the visible good effects of his 'labours, a thousand fold——The only felicities, which 'I am sure this world has to give *him*, in return for the 'most substantial obligations on its part. And may 'the memorials of his public spirit, raise and animate a 'succession of patriots disposed to bless our posterity 'with the same warmth of heart, generosity of spirit, 'and just discernment o objects, which hath made 'HIM so great a blessing to his country in the present 'generation.'

Page xxxiv. [D.]

The *Considerations on Popery*, first published in the Spring of 1768, were received with high approbation by some very elevated and liberal prelates of our own church. And so early as in the June of that year, a proposal for re-printing that work in Dublin was conveyed to the Author, by Mr. David Hay, at the request of some distinguished prelates and clergy, of the church of Ireland, especially the bishop of Down and Connor.

In Mr. Hay's Letter to Mr. Blackburne, it is mentioned, that some omissions in the republication of his book, had been recommended by Archdeacon Mann, which the Author, not yet fully acquainted with the character of that gentleman, apprehended might ex-

tend to matters of importance; under this apprehension, Mr. Blackburne concludes his answer to Mr. Hay in these words.

'As no man stands more disengaged from party connexions than myself, my sentiments in print are never influenced by the least considerations of that kind. If, therefore, any thing of mine should be altered so in the re-printing, as to appear to be accommodated either by partial suppressions, additions, or other modifications, to the humour, or views of particular men, or bodies of men, I should certainly remonstrate publicly against such usage.'

F. B. to David Hay, 24th. June, 1768.

Our Author's anxiety, however, on this head, was presently removed by the Irish edition of his work being printed in a perfect conformity to the English copy, and without any of those 'corruptions or expurgations' which had been actually suggested from another quarter, to accommodate the taste of certain churchmen, of a different complexion from the two dignitaries mentioned above.

In a Letter of compliment from the Rev. Job Orton, on the appearance of the *Considerations*, which we find set apart by the Author, among other materials, for a second edition, at one time intended, the following correction of an error in that work, may be thought worthy of insertion here.

'I observe, that in the *Considerations*, &c. p. 134.* you question, whether more than the four Jesuits, there mentioned, were canonized before the year 1765. Hence, I take it for granted, that you had not seen the life of Father *John Francis Regis*, who was canonized about thirty years ago. And indeed, I imagine, the book is scarce, as I never met with an acquaintance who had it, or had seen it; nor do I remember it in any catalogue of books to be sold. How it came to be recommended to, and purchased by the

* Vid. vol. iv. p. 118.

'reading society, of which I was a member, I cannot 'recollect.—As therefore it is, I suppose, a curiosity of 'itself, gives a clear idea of the nature of popery, and 'proves that it is always the same, I have sent it to 'your publisher, Mr. Cadell, and take the freedom to 'beg your acceptance of it, as a token of my gratitude 'for the service you are attempting to do for our com-'mon interest, as Britons and Protestants.'

Job Orton to F. B. 26th. Sept. 1768.

The information in the *English Traveller's* Letter, Appendix, No. iii. of the *Considerations*, was procured by the industry of Mr. Hollis.* And notwithstanding the attempts made to invalidate some very trifling circumstances, in that account of the Popish Seminaries, for the education of English and Irish children in Flanders, and along the coast from Boulogne, the extraordinary diligence with which these inquiries were conducted, and the exactness with which every particular was minuted down at the time, leave us no room to doubt, that in every substantial fact, that statement was strictly and scrupulously true.

Page xliii. [E.]

Mr. Peckard's Narrative,

in a Letter to Archdeacon Blackburne.

Dear Sir, Nov. 3d, 1760.

I have several times attempted to perform my promise to you by sending you a narrative of my affair at Lambeth. But, believe me, I have hitherto been hindered by daily and very disagreeable avocations. A house to build,—the necessary attendance on a number of workmen,—the coming into a new place,—the woeful consequence of it, that most miserable murder of time in

* Vid. Memoirs of T. Hollis p. 316, and Appendix to the Memoirs, pp. 693—698.

receiving and returning visits of ceremony;—add to these the inconsiderate civility of former acquaintance coming to stay with us, while our poor habitation is all in confusion. These are some of the circumstances, that must be my apology for not writing to you sooner. About a month since indeed I began to have hopes of a little respite ; but just at that time I received the unexpected intelligence, that a regiment to which I am chaplain, was suddenly ordered upon this expedition. This gave me a good deal of trouble to prepare and send away proper certificates, that I had his late Majesty's particular leave of absence. And no sooner had I done this, than came the news of his Majesty's death. So that I am now in a state of very disagreeable suspense, not knowing how far that leave may operate in my favour. —There is one consideration too, which gives me some pleasure in reflecting upon this delay, and indeed in some measure justifies it. And that is, that I am now certain that I am free from all resentment against his Grace, if ever I had any; and am confident, that I can speak of what passed at Lambeth as a mere matter of fact, without any of those emotions generally occasioned by what some perhaps would have thought the contumelious oppression of insolence vested with authorit y.

The beginning of this year I waited upon his Grace at Lambeth, with all the common credentials requisite for a dispensation, and in the common forms. Having delivered these papers to the proper officer, I attended his Grace's chaplain to go through the examination usual upon these occasions. He gave me these two Questions,—" An doctrina de intermedio præmiorum et pænarum statu sit sacræ scriptura consentanea ?" And, " An anima sit sua natura immortalis ?" He wrote them down in the order in which they stand here, and without putting either a negatur or affirmatur to them, like an honest and candid man leaving to me the liberty of my own opinion. I denied them both, and transposing the order in which he put them down, because the notion of an intermediate state comes as it were naturally after

the other, I wrote what I here send you. You must consider the situation in which these exercises were written, and excuse all the faults you will see in them. You have them literally as they were delivered to his Grace without the least alteration, for I have transcribed them from, and compared them carefully with, the foul copy which I wrote at Lambeth, and which I have before me. My present business is not to send you an elegant composition, but to give you a faithful account of what passed there, that you may be a judge of the whole transaction.

Quæstio de intermedio præmiorum et pœnarum statu tota pendet ex alterâ per tot sæcula decantatâ, de naturali animæ immortalitate. Si enim vitæ principium nobis a naturâ insitum et inseparabile prorsus nullum sit, erutum plane et subversum est status intermedii fundamentum. Hanc itaque sententiam liberius paulo quam usitatum est primo liceat paucis perstringere.

Incerta sane semper, et sæpe misera est hominum in hac vitâ conditio; non raro evenit ut nefarii pessimique ad mortem usque malorum expertes persistant; non raro ut qui virtutibus sint spectati, totam in doloribus ferendis vitam absumant. Hinc patet non ab hodierno et mortali statu humanam pendere beatitudinem; neque debita virtutem in hac vitâ præmia reportare. Hinc immortalitatis spes, vitæque non explenda melioris sitis. Hinc futuræ remunerationis argumentum elicitur, reipe divinæ non esse congruum justitiæ, ut debitâ virtus felicitate careat. Absit vero, vel ut de cujusvis virtute, vel de miseriâ, multo magis ut de justitiâ divinâ aliquid temere pronunciemus. Res plane est, ut aiunt, coram non judice.

Quid autem actum est? num id omne verum est quod optamus? pauper divitias optat, optat ephippia bos; miseri homines, et qui a lege naturæ ad mortem dediti sunt, immortali ratem optant; et proculdubio vitæ immortalitas quam ardentissime est optanda, attamen ex votis ardentissimis minimé probanda.

Concedimus sané futuram vitam hoc modo ex ratione probabili constare; non autem ideo sequitur illam fore

certam; si vero concedamus illam esse ex hac argumentandi ratione certam, minime tamen exinde sequitur illam æternam fore. Quod si Christo ex hac parte fidendum sit, status futurus non modo certus est, verum etiam absolute sempiternus.

Aliud autem ex philosophiæ scholis argumentum petitur, idque apud principes omnium sæculorum viros, pene dixerim et gentium primarium ad immortalitatem animæ probandam.

Quod cunque ex materiâ compositum est, in partes potest dividi, ideoque dissolutioni est obnoxium. Anima vero unicum quoddam est et immateriale; in partes ideo solvi nequit, dissolutioni minime obnoxia neque morti subdita.

Quid autem probatum est? Ex conjecturâ imo ex ignorantiâ nostrâ, hoc quodcunque est argumenti penitus est deductum. Spiritûs, corporisve naturam, ideoque quid velit terminus materiale, quid immateriale, plane nescimus. Nonne idem Deus tam immateriale, quam materiale creavit? Materialibus existentiæ terminum finemque imposuit: quid ni etiam materiâ carentibus utpote quæ pari modo creato fuerint? Novimus sane materialia finem habere; anne autem exinde sequitur, ea quæ materiâ carent finem non habitura, in æternum scilicet suapte vi perduratura? Non valet consequentia; neque sapientis est a dubiis, multo minus ab ignotis, argumenta petere.

[Quid autem de hac re sana docet ratio? Quid cæco de sene capulari judicandum? Quid de morbo, quid demum de merâ lassitudine confectis? nonne est videre cum vigore corporis una vigorem animi decrescere, et prorsus in nihilum redigi? Unus forsitan alterve confectus morbo, senectute gravatus, vel etiam moribundus vigorem animi mirum in modum retinuerit. Plerique autem a naturâ ita sumus comparati, ut una natæ, vigentes unâ vietæque mentis vires corporisque videantur.]

Dicet autem aliquis, naturalem animæ immortalitatem si tollas, nonne futuræ spem vitæ tollis, maximum istud, imó unicum miseriarum solamen? Minime, immortalitatem enim a naturâ, non a Christo derivatum,

nullo modo patitur, imó respuit sacrarum totus literarum tenor; et legentibus solum Jesum Christum unicum futuræ authorem vitæ proponit, protenditque. Fieri autem non potest ut duo sint vitæ immortalis fontes, et si Christus humano generi immortalitatem dederit, nequaquam ista in naturâ nostrâ sita esse potuit. Scriptura autem ubique docet Christum futuræ unicum vitæ fontem. Christi vibicibus sanati sumus. Quorsum vero vibices istæ? Quorsum ipsa mors ignominiosa? Quem in finem istam Christus mortem passus est? Scilicet ut nos a morte liberaret. Quo autem modo nos a morte liberat, si vitæ immortalitas jure quodam naturali nostra sit? Neutiquam ille a morte potest liberari, qui morti neutiquam est obnoxius. Quod vero in suâ naturâ est immortale, morti neutiquam est obnoxium.

I observe in the foul copy a slight stroke with a pencil across the paragraph where I have drawn my pen on the other side.* Whether it was accidental or whether I struck out that passage, I cannot tell. I am now interrupted again. I will however, send this away to you, and will proceed the very first opportunity I have. Be assured that I am very sincerely and affectionately yours,

P. PECKARD.

Fletton near Peterborough,
Turn at Stilton.

Fletton, near Peterborough, Dec. 5, 1760.

Dear Sir,

Since the time I was interrupted, when I was writing to you last, I have been kept in a perpetual hurry and confusion; and what is extremely disagreeable, have been all along, and still am in a state of suspense; not knowing any thing more with regard to my military situation, but that my regiment has been for some time embarked. However, as there has been this unexpected delay, I begin to flatter myself, with some hope, that

* The paragraph p. xcvii. [B.]

this expedition will not proceed. I think I ended my last letter with the first of the Exercises written at Lambeth. The other was as follows:

" An Doctrina de intermedio præmiorum et pœnarum statu sit sacræ scripturæ consentanea? Negatur.

Futuram hominis, cursu hujusce vitæ peracto, conditionem, non ita claré edocet vel humana suis viribus innixa ratio, vel dux illa vitæ philosophia, ut de istâ prorsus omne dubium tollatur.

Ad decreta philosophorum quod attinet, parum hinc auxilii est sperandum. Non enim apud istud genus hominum aliquid certi reperiundum est, ubi in hac lite dirimendâ tute pedem figamus.

Rerum vero naturam, et rationis lumen si consulamus; ulterius paulo progrediendum. Attamen ex hac parte ad optatum finem et plenam rei notitiam non est perveniendum.

Quæstio tota pendet ex authoritate scripturæ; neque ex alio quovis fonte nostra de illâ cognitio qualis qualis haurienda. Excussis itaque fabulis, atque abjectâ præstigiosâ dogmatum philosophicorum farragine, verbo Dei unice innitendum est.

Quid autem de hac re scriptura? nonne aperté et planissimé edocet mortuos sine vita, sine cogitatione, sine perceptione ad diem resurrectionis usque jacere? " In morte tui nulla est reminiscentia"—" nihil omnino " sciunt mortui"—nonne ubique edocet statum mortis esse statum quietis, silentii, oblivionis, tenebrarum, corruptionis? Quid inde? in iis quæ ex divina revelatione pendent, anne licitum est ad arbitrium novas rerum conditiones fingere, ut inani neotericorum quorundum hypothesi inserviamus?

Fatendum sane loca esse perpaucula quædam, alia inter allegorias et parabolas, alia inter δυσνοητα quæ sacri sermonis interpretes, cætera satis docti, ita explicarunt, ac si homines in statu mortis vitam vere vitalem agerent; ubi mens illorum conscia quæ in hac vita fuerant peracta, varios ante judicii diem felicitatis aut miseriæ gradus percipit. Nonne autem hæc loca obscura, hæc intellectu difficilia per ea sunt explicanda quæ omni

dubio carent? Quæ sunt ipsâ luce clariora? Quæ mortem penitus mortalem tradunt?

Cui verò usui inservit hæc in intervallo mortis conscia mens? Anne ut melior fiat homo, et in diem judicii paratior? Purgatorium pontificiale plané constituimus.

Præterea mors in sacra scriptura dicitur somnus; mortui dicuntur obdormire; resurgentes autem evigilare, expergisci. Quid vero? Nisi ut somno mortis excusso, in futuræ lucem vitæ resurgamus! Quomodo autem fieri potest ut somnum excutiamus, si adhuc usque evigilemus?

Hoc unicum de hac re tradit generalis scripturæ tenor; humanum genus per Adami inobedientiam morti esse penitus obnoxium; vitæ autem futuræ per Christi merita restitutum; mentione nullâ factâ de statu quovis inter mortem et mortuorum resurrectionem medio, neque de isto philosophiæ dogmate, cui prorsus innititur, naturali animæ immortalitate.

Æquo attendamus animo quod ipse Christus loquitur —"vado parare vobis locum"—"iterum veniam et ad "me ipsum vos recipiam, ut ubi ego sum, vos etiam sitis" —nonne videmus vitæ benè peractæ præmia non esse possidenda, donec secundâ vice ad suos venerit Christus?

Præterea sanæ rationi minime est consentaneum, quemvis indictâ causâ vel præmia accepturum, vel pœnas luiturum. Judicii autem nullius meminit sacra scriptura ante finem mundi "quando nos omnes oportet manifestari ante tribunal Christi, ut referat unusquisque, secundum ea quæ fecerit, sive bonum sive malum."

Nonne Paulus præsentem ubique cum futurâ vitam proxime conjungit? "Statutum est hominibus semel mori, post hoc autem judicium." Plané patet apostolum per hæc, vitam præsentem cum judicio universali, (spatio mortis propter ἀισθησίας extinctionem, moramque ideo penitus insensibilem pro nihilo prorsus habito) immediatè, ut par erat, conjungere. Rem ita se habere sine dubio judicabat, alioqui nequaquam tradidisset inanem sublatâ resurrectione baptismum; spem nostram

non ultra breves præsentis vitæ terminos protendi; in Christo obdormientes penitus periisse. Hæc et id genus quamplurima, quæ in sacra scriptura leguntur, plane innuunt, imó demonstrant futilem esse et prorsus commentitiam de statu quovis intermedio doctrinam.

Denique futuræ resurrectionis, et universalis judicii doctrinam diruere, imo radicitus evellere videntur, qui præviæ in mortis intervallo perceptioni patrocinantur. Si enim mortui perceptione quavis sint præditi, necesse est ut sint miseriæ vel felicitatis conscii propter ea quæ in hac vitâ fuerant peracta. Hanc autem peractæ vitæ conscientiam si retineant, pii jamjam ab impiis, oves ab hædis jamjam secernuntur. Futuro quis ergo locus est judicio? Quare rursus agendum quod jam actum est?

Quid plura? per tria sæcula Christi mortem proxime sequentia de fabuloso mortuorum statu intermedio, quatenus ecclesiæ doctrinâ, ne verbum quidem. Adversatur generalis scripturæ tenor; adversatur Apostoli, ipse adversatur Christus.

Qui per prima tempora, perpauci sane, invisibilem quendam locum commenti sunt, ubi mortui resurrectionem præstolantes commorantur, quique hisce temporibus sibi suadent, aliisve talia pollicentur, æquum est ut institutum aliquod divinum ostendant, ex quo tam magniloqua fides orta sit. Quod vero de hade apud eos legi potest, philosophiæ tam Judaicæ quam Gentilis (pace nominum magnorum dixerim) plane sordes est et purgamentum.

Hæc itaque utut leviter perstricta sufficiant ostendere sacris literis non esse congruam illorum sententiam qui mortuos perceptione quavis esse præditos asserunt. Nos è contra Christi et apostolorum verbo confisi hæc colligimus—In statu mortis nihil percipimus; neque dolore afficimur, nec voluptate fruimur; præmia tandem aut supplicia vitæ benè secusvè peractæ cum Christus denuo venerit, accepturi.

These exercises being delivered to his Grace, he said, *he would not permit those subjects to be treated in that manner;* and insisted that I should write two other Exercises. When I was informed of this, I desired his

Grace's chaplain would let me know ingenuously, whether or no his Grace intended to require any recantation of opinion from me; because, if so, it was not necessary to have any farther trouble there, as I could not comply with it, being convinced in my conscience, that I had advanced nothing but what was true, and strictly agreeable to the doctrine of the gospel. He told me he did not believe his Grace would require any such thing, but imagined he would talk with me, and give me some good advice. He then gave me two other subjects to write upon; one, the external; the other the internal evidence of the truth of Christianity. What I wrote upon these subjects, was satisfactory, at least so far as was necessary to my purpose; for the exercises were not rejected. But then his Grace made objections to the form of my testimonium, and another form was sent me, in which was inserted this clause—That I had not published any thing contrary to the doctrine of the church of England.

As I was then at a great distance from the clergymen who had signed my former testimonium, and as I knew there were at that time in London three clergymen of unexceptionable character of the county in which my livings lay; in order to save myself trouble, I carried this new form to them, and they readily signed it. But when this second testimonium was brought to Lambeth, it was signified to me that it would be proper for those persons who had signed my first, to sign this second testimonium. I was then obliged to send another copy of this form into the country, and by some accident attending the return of it, I was very near losing the living by a lapse. I did however receive it just in time, and immediately carried it to Lambeth. I was then ordered to attend his Grace in person; and what follows is as nearly as I can recollect, the substance of what his Grace said to me.

His Grace told me, that I had at last brought a testimonium in due form, and that he was glad of it; he repeated a second and third time that he was glad of it. He then said he would not have any one think, that he

concluded any doctrine or opinion to be true; merely because it was a part of any particular system or establishment; that he by no means thought so, and looked upon the scripture to be the only criterion of religious truth. He then ordered me to sit down opposite to himself at a table, on which were some written papers and a book, which his Grace informed me, contained some treatises concerning the doctrine of an intermediate state. Amongst some others, here is a treatise entitled,—No proof in the Scriptures, &c. &c. which is without any name; and here are also two sets of observations upon the same subject, Mr. Peckard, that bear your name: are you the author of these observations? I assented. His Grace then told me, that he had taken the pains to examine them, and to make several extracts from them. He told me that he did not send for me to dispute the point with me, and that he did not require any answer from me. That his present intent was to give me some advice, which he hoped by the blessing of God, might have a good influence upon me. That I had in these observations said a great many very severe, and very uncharitable things with regard both to the papists and deists, and indeed that I had not been less severe upon our own church. His Grace then read to me many extracts that he had made out of my pamphlets, and his own observations upon them: and I must do his Grace the justice to say, that supposing his principles to have been true, he spoke for a long time with great clearness and precision. It would be to no purpose to recollect any, either of these extracts, or the observations upon them; because the things objected to, were what you have already seen, being the same with those that have been taken notice of by Mr. Goddard, Dr. Morton, Mr. Steffe, and Mr. Fleming. His Grace's observations also, were in fact the very same with theirs, excepting that they were made in a more masterly manner. In several places his Grace mistook my meaning, and this I say with certainty, because several times, upon reading some extract out of

my pamphlet, he said to me, in this place Mr. P. you mean so and so; which indeed was very far from what I intended. I once attempted to say, that my meaning was entirely different from what his Grace had expressed; but he would not permit me to speak; bending himself forward in his chair, and extending his hand toward me, and saying that he required no answer from me. This part of his conduct, I own, I thought to be insulting and oppressive, to be told that I meant what I did not mean, and then to be condemned for that meaning which was his own, and none of mine. His Grace acknowledged, at his first setting out, that the scripture was the only criterion of religious truth; but he was pleased to try me in all the passages that appeared to him exceptionable, by the authority of the canons, the articles, and the liturgy; an authority which I by no means allowed, and which he himself had virtually set aside as insufficient, by what he had said with regard to the authority of scripture. In conclusion, his Grace required that I should have some farther conversation with his chaplain upon these points, and that I should give him some satisfaction with respect to what he had said to me, otherwise he could not grant his fiat to my dispensation. His Grace then appealed to his chaplain, who had been present all the time, saying, that *he had not made use of any bitterness of expression to me*, and so dismissed me. I was then conducted into the chaplain's apartment, and there I wrote and signed the following articles: at least if they are not word for word the same, I know they are very nearly so, and contain the full sense and substance of them.

1. I do acknowledge that in the extracts made by your Grace, out of my pamphlets, there are some unbecoming expressions used towards those who believe the doctrine of an intermediate state; all such expressions I hereby retract as unjustifiable.

2. I do acknowledge that I have charged that doctrine with some consequences, which upon farther consideration do not appear to be necessarily deducible from it.

3. I do acknowledge that there are some passages that seem to carry reflections upon the liturgy; but I do declare, that I did not publish them with intent to condemn the liturgy, which I think agreeable to the word of God, and to which I promise to conform.

4. Lastly, I do declare that I engaged in writing on this subject with no other view, but that of doing service to the cause of christianity; that I will seriously reconsider the subject, and not publish any thing more in defence of it.

As to the first of these articles, I have to observe that his Grace had said, I had been very severe and uncharitable with regard to the papists and deists, and our own church. Now I am not myself conscious of any want of charity to those, who differ in opinion from me; on the contrary, I can truly say, that I feel a strong inclination to do them all the service in my power. However, his Grace gave me to understand, that in this point, I am mistaken; that I do not know so well as his Grace, the intent and feelings of my own mind. I therefore retracted all unbecoming expressions as unjustifiable.

As to the second article, it seems that I have somewhere said to this purpose,—That the doctrine of an intermediate state is absolutely subversive of the very foundation of christianity. His Grace hoped there were many good christians who believed that doctrine, and therefore I had charged it with consequences that were not necessarily deducible from it.

With regard to the first part of the third article, it is true, that in those passages there hinted at, I had no particular view towards condemning the liturgy, I only wrote them in proof of what I had advanced. I have not said any thing but what in my conscience, I thought to be true: and I always was, and I hope ever shall be of this opinion, that if truth and the liturgy do not agree, it is my duty to abide by the truth, and let the liturgy shift for itself, as it best can. But with respect to the inserting the words, "*which I think to be agree-*

able to the word of God," there was a considerable difficulty. I told his Grace's chaplain that if they were supposed to signify the whole, and every part, and every word of the liturgy, that I could not sign them, because that was not my opinion. He told me his Grace could not expect it in so rigid a sense. To which I replied that if they signified only *in part* I should readily sign; firmly believing great part of the liturgy to be agreeable to the word of God.

With regard to the last article, the first part of it is strictly true. But it was not stipulated whether the last clause was absolute or conditional. Nor is it any great matter. I myself signed it (that is, if I know any thing of my own mind and intention) conditionally—that is, that I would not publish any thing more upon this subject, without a serious reconsideration. But perhaps his Grace may know that I did not mean so, and that I signed it absolutely. Yet I think his Grace who seems to be a very cautious and circumspect man, would scarce require it in that sense; because it would in effect be setting himself above the laws of England. They give at present to every man the liberty of the press, and I imagine his Grace would scarce say, I will deprive you of the liberty of every loyal subject: because if there is any abuse of that liberty such as to deserve a legal punishment, there is a legal punishment adapted to the offence. It is however a matter of mere indifference to me whether it be absolute or conditional. I shall pray for the continuance of your life and health, and if that prayer be granted, Christianity will lose nothing, though I should be for ever condemned to absolute silence.

As soon as his Grace had received this paper, he signed the fiat for my dispensation. The next day he sent to me to desire I would put in the words "*or the articles,*" after the words "*condemn the liturgy,*" in the third article;—his chaplain told me that his Grace did not insist upon it, but only desired it as a favour. I told the chaplain that I would readily sign these words, "*or the articles,*" under the same restriction that I had

signed that the liturgy was agreeable to the word of God, i. e. *in part*, and so inserted the words desired.

And thus ended this affair, concerning which I shall make no manner of reflection, for fear I should be thought a party too nearly concerned to pass an impartial judgment. I have only told the matter of fact to the best of my memory, and must now leave you, and others to judge of the circumstances as you think they deserve.

PETER PECKARD.

There was one inaccuracy in some part of these pamphlets of mine which his Grace took notice of, and seemed to lay great stress upon it. It seems that I have somewhere said that identity is personal consciousness *continued*. His Grace argued,—how can you consistently say that identity is personal consciousness continued, when by your own scheme you establish an interruption of consciousness? which is certainly true. But I think a candid critic might have seen that it was merely an inaccuracy,—that I must mean personal consciousness *restored*, and that I could not be supposed to mean an uninterrupted continuation of personal consciousness through the state of death; the very doctrine which I had undertaken to refute. If it falls in your way to take notice of this mistake, be so good as to set it right.

I must by this time have tried you as much as myself; I will therefore bid you farewell. I hope for an opportunity of writing to you again before it be long. In the mean time accept of my best wishes, and be assured that I am ever most sincerely and affectionataly yours,

P. PECKARD.

Fletton, near Peterborough,
Turn at Stilton.
Dec. 6th, 1760.

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THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN DR. LAW AND DR. WARBURTON, &c.

No. 1.

To the Rev. Mr. Law.

Dear Sir, [1746. E.]

On my coming to town yesterday I had the pleasure of finding your favour of the 16th.

The hint you are so good to give me of the *natural mortality of the human mind,* pleases me extremely, as I find my notions confirmed by one for whose judgment I have the highest regard. You must know I am now at work on the 3d, V. of the *Divine Legation,* the last book of which on account of the importance of it, and the uncertainty of life, I do first. It is on the Christian religion; and one of my main principles in explaining its nature is that above. I think I can do great things with it. What will you say, if the contrary opinion, generally received, has given all the strength to infidel books, and all the embarrass to their answerers? But I know you see into this whole affair as well as I, though I don't know any else it ever entered into the head of. However it is so ticklish a point, that I would not have it get the least wind. The clamour and the injury it would do me, would be greater than you can imagine. I shall be happy enough, if when the uses made of it are seen, I shall be excused; such is the felicity of the times we live in. Baxter whom I much esteem, had a notion that the *natural immortality might be demonstrated,* though I think he did not pretend it necessarily followed the *immateriality* which I think he has well proved. I should be obliged to you, when at any leisure hour you think on this subject, if you would consider what may be said to expose the weakness of those common arguments by which the *natural immortality* is demonstrated. I have not seen the book you mention of Hutchinson; but understand by my correspondent from Glasgow, that some of the moral-sense Hutchin-

son's followers are printing something against my account of the double doctrine &c. But I fancy the book will be confuted before it appears. For Mr. Towne, who was of Clare-hall, and whom I fancy you may remember, has confuted the wretched nonsense of Jackson, though without a name. The lady you mention appears to me a very extraordinary woman, and I think myself very happy in her acquaintance: your remark of her deserting some of Mr. Locke's principles is extremely just. Mr. Jortin always speaks of you with the highest affection.

I am, Dear Sir, your very affectionate
and faithful humble servant,
W. WARBURTON.

No. 2.

To the Rev. Dr. Law.

Dear Sir, [1751. E.]

I have seen, by the favour of Mr. Browne, the copy of a letter which I wrote to you some years ago, and in which I express my belief of the *natural mortality of the human mind:* from whence you have collected that I grounded my belief on your principle of the *physical essence of the soul;* whereas I grounded it on its moral condition: as may appear from what I say, in the same letter, of my belief of its *immateriality,* arising from Mr. Baxter's having proved it to be *immaterial.* So that by *the natural mortality of the human mind,* I meant only its state under what is called *natural religion;* and this the consequence of its *moral,* not *physical* nature; I apprehending that the light of nature discovers that no more than a finite reward and temporary existence hereafter, is due to the good; as none at all is due to brutes, notwithstanding I hold their souls to be alike *immaterial,* because their actions have no *morality* in them. This was simply and undisguisedly my thoughts when I wrote that letter: which yet now I know your

sentiments of the *materiality* of the soul, I do not wonder you should take in a sense comformable to that principle. But I did not then know you held any such. Had I known it, I should certainly* have been more precise and exact in my expression. I ought indeed to have been so, though I knew it not. For had I not accidentally mentioned my belief of the immateriality, the expression seems so strongly to refer to the *physical* nature of the soul, that I must have thrown myself on the candour of every one to have believed me on my word, against the most obvious sense. To say the truth, my letter was wrote, as all mine are, in great haste. For having an aversion to writing, I trespass on my correspondents, and defer sitting down till I have several to dispatch together.

That you should understand me therefore as of your sentiments, I do not wonder at, now I have seen the copy of the letter; though I did when in town you told me you understood so much, your politeness not suffering you to tell me of this expression in my letter. Though I wish you had, that the matter might then have been set right, and you under no *necessity* of communicating the contents of that letter to your friends. I say, under a necessity; for I am sure you thought yourself under one, before you could prevail with yourself to divulge a private letter of friendship, whose subject was in its nature a secret, and *desired* to be kept so for important reasons there mentioned. You will say I made no secret of your opinion of the *sleep of the soul*, and of my dislike of it, and my unwillingness that you should publish any thing about it. But give me leave, Sir, to say, that you had first made your opinion public, which very much alters the case. Not to throw into the account, which I might truly do, that what I said,

* Here the first page of Dr. Warburton's Letter ends, and on the margin of it is written in Dr. Law's hand as follows.

'N. B. All this Dr. W. afterwards [in 1755 E.] at Doncaster owned to me to be mere chicanery, and in effect retracted, by declaring *I was right as to the meaning of his former Letter.*'

was in the warmth of friendship for your interests; however this matter may have been represented to you.

It has been said, and I think, truly, that expostulations do well between lovers, but rarely so between friends. I do not intend this for such. I neither do nor will complain of a friend I so much value, should be so proud to serve, and whom I truly honour. If you on your hand will discourage foolish reports, I will assure you I will do so on mine. I did in this very instance. When first the person (whom I much value) told me in general of an anecdote, as he called it, which regarded my honour, I directly answered him, that he might entertain me much better than with stories, in which my name was made free with; a matter which I was absolutely incurious about, and always avoided listening to. Notwithstanding this he would afterwards tell it me, I am persuaded with the best intentions in the world: and, indeed, had I been in his place, I should have thought, as he did, that friendship obliged me to it.

I am, Dear Sir, with the truest esteem,
your most faithful friend and servant,
W. WARBURTON.

No. 3.

Dr. Law, to Dr. Warburton:

Dear Sir, [No date. E.]

I am obliged to you for your last favour, and wish I had heard from you sooner on the subject, which might perhaps have hindered some surmises that have I believe, occasioned much uneasiness to both of us; though as for representations, supposed to be made of you to myself, direct or indirect, I solemnly assure you I never met with any; and if the anecdote conveyed to you, had either happened to miscarry or proved more authentic, I fancy neither of us would have been the worse for want of it.

That you said the least thing about our correspon-

dence, a communication of papers &c. I never heard or thought; nor could I have any more apprehension of your being alarmed at what passed here among a very few friends, till I learned it from your account the other day to two of them, Messrs. Br—— and Bl——.

Since that indeed I have seen a series of letters to the latter of these gentlemen from your informant, which shews me that you had room enough to suspect strange freedoms to have been used in relation to you; but yet the narratives to you, and to Mr. Bl—— plainly contradict each other, and both make a most inconsistent piece of absurdity from end to end, though solely formed on what the said Bl——'s relation should have collected from him at different times on his soliciting to get a sight of the Thesis, and to be let into the subject, suggesting that *this was necessary to be considered in a Review of the Argument of the Divine Legation, in order to see how the said Argument would be affected by the various hypotheses about the state of the soul after death, and particularly that which supposes it asleep between death and Judgment.* He adds that upon his *transmitting to you the said Review,* you introduced *me* first, by saying, you *supposed the author of it may wish to know some transactions between you and me on the sleep &c.* from whence I have too much reason to conclude, that he has been no less inquisitive with you in order to sift out all he could upon the subject, as also to wish that the young man, to whom I am an entire stranger, had made better use of his intelligence whatever that might be.

But as you think he had the best intentions in the world, I hope they will continue such, and that his many misconceptions in the present case, may make no farther mischief, either between us two, or him and his most valuable relation, to whose account I must refer you for the whole affair, and with whom, where it first arose, I am very willing to leave it.

What seems rather more material, though not much so, is how you and I came to misunderstand each other on so plain a point, after what I first heard from our

friend H——, at Bath, of your intending to treat fully of it in the way above-mentioned, (which was at that time no sort of secret,) which I communicated to you immediately, and which occasioned your reply, and a full sheet from me in consequence, containing all I then had thought upon it, the receipt whereof you acknowledged some time after, without any intimation of our difference in sentiments: (and which sheet, by the bye, I shall be obliged to you for a sight of again, at your leisure, as I have no copy of some part, and the whole cannot be of any use to you, though possibly it may to me, some time or other.)

After thus much had passed between us, though at the distance of three years from the time I saw you in town, I must confess I was a little surprised at your appearing to know nothing at all of it, and afterwards disclaiming all concern with the forementioned doctrine, after the best apology I could make for being forced to enter on it publicly, against my inclinations; in a manner so disadvantageous to it, and perhaps disagreeable to you; both which considerations weighed more with me, than any disadvantage I might possibly have received from it.

This seemingly new turn then, though joined with the most cordial dissuasive to me, from proceeding farther on so dangerous a subject; for which, I doubt not, you had just then grounds from Cambridge; and the sincerity whereof I never questioned, was yet both in its form and manner of urging it, a little surprising (but which I dare say was, at that time communicated to no soul but our common friend Br——,) and made me suspect myself so far, as to take the pains of looking out that same letter of yours, in which it was mentioned, and conferring about it with the said Mr. Br—— on his return. But so far was I from thinking myself under a necessity of communicating it at large as you apprehend, that it had not been divulged even to the other acquaintance above-mentioned, Mr. Bl——, (as he will inform you, if you think worth while to enquire) with whom the subject has been often debated, and

who, from his concern for the doctrine, and communicating some things in relation to it, as well as curiosity to see what had been delivered on it in public, might be a chief occasion of my being at length induced to intimate, where I had voluntarily left the papers, and who had been no less pleased than myself with an expectation, that any labours of ours, were to be superseded by so much abler hands, as we heard were about it, both in London and elsewhere.

The same principle might oblige me to satisfy some other common friends with us, as to the prospect there was of any thing being done in it, and in justice to add then, that though I once heard you had been very large upon it, yet now I doubted whether that was fact, the reason of which doubt likewise was sometimes necessary to be mentioned, and might, as far as I apprehend, be done so, without any danger of the least disparagement, though that was intimated but to very few, to none from whom it was ever like to be turned to your prejudice, or could give just alarm to the most jealous, and might have rested very safely, for any thing I know, had not such an over-officious friend first pry'd so far into the thing, as to raise wrong reports, and then give us the trouble of rectifying them. This you must know to be too common a practice among very inquisitive men; which is extraordinary hard to cure or guard against, and which, if it should meet with as common encouragement, would render the most useful kind of conversation the most dangerous; and a free friendly intercourse upon any such points as this before us, absolutely impracticable.

But of this perhaps more than enough. If upon farther examination, you find any thing that seems to require a fuller explanation from me, you may at any time command it with great coolness; of temper, I mean, not of either affection or esteem, as the long story above, may serve, I hope to convince you; being conscious of no alteration in the heart, from what you have formerly been so good as ascribe to me (and which opinion after all, I must do your correspondent, Mr.

C—— r, the justice to allow that he reports you still retain,) having no intent of taking a handle from the late transaction, to inlist among your adversaries.

I take the same opportunity of paying my acknowledgment, for the honour you are pleased to do me in your last piece, * and am,

With all respect,

Dear Sir, your very humble servant,

E. LAW.

No. 4.

P. S. As to the doctrine itself, or your new explication of the letter about it, I have not room left to add any thing satisfactory. I know of nothing we have to do with either materiality, or immateriality; provided the soul's faculties and operations, do in fact so far depend upon the body, as to drop with it, and thereby conform to the general account of the human constitution, given in the holy scriptures; which shew, I apprehend, sufficiently, that immortality flows not from the original frame of man, but is the extraordinary gift of God, through Jesus Christ. You are undoubtedly at liberty to wave the subject wholly, or treat it in what way you judge best; but I was too apt to imagine you had used the common terms in the usual meaning, and hope you will now excuse me, if I be so free as to declare *to you*, that I can have no more conception of the natural mortality being understood in a moral sense, or as depending on any moral considerations, under either natural or revealed religion, than I have of Mr. C——r's scheme of the soul's sleeping with an internal consciousness, or self-contemplation. I beg leave to conclude once more with assuring you, that notwithstanding all my apprehension of its importance, to a right explanation of the use, excellence, and necessity of revelation,

* *Julian.*

its reasonableness in these times, and as such my great regard for it, how frequently soever the notion may have been in disgrace formerly, or what hard name or ill face soever it may bear at present (on which account, though you have no acquaintance with it, yet I trust you will, for your friend's sake, use it kindly if it fall in your way;) yet I have no determined resolution of meddling much more with it, at least not explicitly or on a sudden; nor ever shall entertain the least thought of smuggling any share of reputation from any writer whatsoever, especially on such an old point, which has at times been agitated with no small heat, ever since the second century. My compliments to honest Mr. Jortin, as also to Mr. Browne, for his late good offices. Any commands by him, or intimation that we are like to live upon the same terms as before all this stir happened, will be acceptable.

The Letter of Dr. Warburton, No. 1, in the above correspondence, as also '*the paper of hints*,' from Dr. Law to Dr. W. and Dr. W's acknowledgment of its receipt, were all written in the year 1746. 'I took my degree,' says Dr. Law, 'in 1749, when he, (Dr. W.) 'changed sides.' Dr. Law's question in the divinity schools, should seem to have been more than once since that time maintained there, under different forms of proposition, "Non datur status medius inter mortem et "resurrectionem;" * and, "Status animarum in inter-"vallo mortis atque resurrectionis agentium quicquam "sive sentientium ex sacris literis colligi nequit." †

The following extracts from two of Dr. Law's Letters, to Mr. Blackburne, may supply some additional matter of illustration to the foregoing correspondence.

'I am glad you have rescued the old heretic, Lay-

* Watson's Theological Tracts, vol. i. p. xxvii. No. 174.
† Disney's Memoirs and Works of Dr. Jebb, vol. i. p. 29.

'ton, from oblivion.* I sent up that fragment of him 'with the Contents, and part of your Epistle, anony- 'mous, to friend Warburton, with a challenge either 'to have the courage to proceed in the *Divine Legation*, 'on tha basis, notwithstanding a whole army of Clar- 'kians, or drop the whole (which must fall with that 'system) and return my papers. What he will say, I 'know not, but shall know very well what to think. 'Browne was to deliver my message, whom I let into 'the secret of our correspondence; but whether he also 'have the courage of running the least hazard to dis- 'oblige, I question. This sad taste of trimming, my 'dear friend, must undo us all.'

Dr. Law to F. B. 31st. May, 1750.

On the appearance of the new edition of the *Divine Legation*, in 1765, Dr. Law writes as follows, to his friend and fellow-labourer.

'The very extraordinary author of that most empi- 'rical piece of incoherence, stiled the *Divine Legation*, 'having after seven and twenty years vamping and re- 'vamping, left it in its last edition, as lame and imper- 'fect as in the first; I should have let it rest in that 'state of silence and oblivion, to which the impartial 'public soon consigned it; had not some offensive parts 'in it been lately rung over by the M. Reviewers, and 'several of those coarse reflections thereby revived, 'which this modest writer, with as little ingenuity as 'gratitude, threw on some persons, who, at his own re- 'quest, had formerly endeavoured to set him right in 'what he wanted to make the ground-work, and grand 'principle of his performance; (as may be made ap- 'pear, if he shall either desire or persist longer in deser- 'ving it,) but has since, for reasons ever uppermost 'with him † thought proper to abandon; and for want 'of it, being forced to drop the last volume, which 'should have dived to the bottom, and drawn up his 'great conclusion, leaves that and his patient readers

* Vid. vol. II. pp. 449, 450, and vol. III. pp. 225—231.
† Vide, vol. iii. p. 281.

'in the lurch, and puts them off with an idle tale of an 'Indian and his gun; intimating, that they are to find 'out the bottom for themselves, and tie all ends toge- 'ther as they can.—As he is always very nimble at call- 'ing names, he compliments the scripture doctrine of '*man's mortality*, with the title of *Sadducean Sophistry*, 'stiling those who hold it, in his random way of ribal- 'dry, *Semipagan*, because it is the very reverse of what 'used to be held in pagan systems, and *middle-men*, 'because they do *not* hold a middle state. He talks 'of the *Sadducean* principle, that the soul is a *quality* 'and not a *substance*, though no Sadducee ever med- 'dled with these terms; and though he has been often 'told, that we have nothing in the world to do with 'them in our controversy on that subject.'

Dr. LAW to F. B. 9th. Sept. 1765.

Page lvii. [G.]

To show the unfairness of Mr. Murphy's quotation, the passage is here printed at full length, with the parts omitted by Mr. M. included within brackets.

'There is indeed one performance ascribed to the 'pen of the Doctor, where the prostitution is of so sin- 'gular a nature, that it would be difficult to select an 'adequate motive for it out of the mountainous heap of 'conjectural causes of human passions or human ca- 'price. We allude to the speech delivered by the late 'unhappy Dr. William Dodd, when he was about to 'hear the sentence of the law pronounced upon him, 'in consequence of an indictment for forgery.

'The voice of the public has given the honour of 'manufacturing this speech to Dr. Johnson; and the 'stile and *configuration* of the speech itself confirm the 'imputation.

'[Dr. Dodd was a man of parts, a poet, and an ora- 'tor. He can hardly be supposed to have suspected, 'that the powers of his own rhetoric would be too feeble 'for so critical an occasion. Presence of mind he

'could not want to compose a speech for himself. His 'effusions both in prose and poetry, during the most 'trying moments of his confinement, prove that he did 'not. The naked, unadorned feelings of his own mind 'on that awful occasion (which he could hardly con-'vey to Dr. Johnson) would have been the most expres-'sive of his sincerity and self-humiliation; and the 'most proper and effectual recommendation of his case, 'to the commiseration of his audience, and the merci-'ful interposition of his judges.

'An ambition to go out of the world with the ap-'plause of having made a florid speech, we cannot, with 'any degree of charity, impute to the unfortunate cri-'minal. He must, in that case, have had vanity suf-'ficient to prevent him from borrowing his materials 'from another.']

'But [whatever inducements Dr. Dodd might have 'to solicit Dr. Johnson's aid on such an occasion] it is 'hardly possible to divine what could be Dr. Johnson's 'motive for accepting the office. A man to express 'the precise state of mind of another about to be des-'tined to an ignominious death for a capital crime, 'should, one would imagine, have some consciousness, 'that he himself had incurred some guilt of the same 'kind; [in which case his own apprehensions would 'furnish him with topics of deprecation, suited to the 'purpose of his obtaining mercy. But this, we trust, 'was not the case.

'Was it then the vanity of shewing how far he was 'superior in abilities to an eminent master in his own 'craft of artificial composition, that prevailed with Dr. 'Johnson to lend his talent on so critical an occasion? 'Such, one might fear, was the motive, from the early 'and general intelligence imparted to the public, by 'whom this admired piece of oratory was fabricated.

'Was it, lastly, the presumption that a speech com-'posed by Dr. Johnson, and delivered by Dr. Dodd, 'could not fail of interesting all the world in favour of

' the prisoner, and of procuring the most powerful in-
' tercession for the unhappy criminals life ?']

Hollis's Memoirs. Appendix pp. 579—581

Page lxii. [H.]

ANSWER TO THE QUESTION,

WHY ARE YOU NOT A SOCINIAN?

1. Because after a serious and careful examination of the scriptures, I cannot perceive that the unity of God, or the exclusive supremacy of the Father requires me to debase the Son to the level of a Plato or a Pythagoras, at least if I am to believe the record, that God is said in the scriptures to have given of his Son.

2. Because I cannot prevail with myself to interpret scripture as the Socinians do, by perverting the words which bear testimony to the existence and dignity of the Son from their natural and obvious meaning, and dealing with them as the Attorney General does with the words of a libel, *viz.* by innuendos. *Sociniani*, says an admirable critic, *non ob aliud tam pertinaces sunt, quam quod nolunt verba scripturæ sacræ eo sensu admittere, quem habent in communi usu. Tenenda, etiam atque etiam premenda sunt verba in proprio significatu ; ad quam rem nobis maximo sunt usui Græci scriptores.* I have weighed many of the Socinian interpretations in this balance, and have found them wanting.

3. Because I cannot approve of that curious and polite system, called *rational Christianity*, the foster father of modern infidelity. Soame Jenyns's account of it is curious and important, and has gravelled the acute and self-sufficient Monthly Reviewers, who are by far the most adroit artificers at explaining and glossing what they do not relish. See also a shrewd and sensible letter from a Deist to that *rational Christian*, Bourn of Norwich, and Robinson's pamphlet, herein-after mentioned.

Qu.—Do you then agree with the Church of England in all things?

Ans.—By no means. I think her forms of faith, worship and discipline, highly exceptionable in many things.

Qu.—Why then do you conform to her and join with her? and particularly, why do you officiate as a minister by her exceptionable forms?

Ans.—It might be sufficient to answer, because I do not know a less exceptionable church, which is really true; but I shall be more explicit.

1. The great objection I have to the Church of England is the imposition of subscription to her Liturgy and Articles of religion. I never have subscribed, since I publicly bore my testimony against this imposition, nor ever will again. And if subscription should ever become the subject of a compulsory law, I am ready to incur the forfeiture even to deprivation. I have written with freedom upon the subject; I have acted consistently with my principle, and have not profited by deserting it in practice, as some others have done. The first clause of the 20th article is the great stumbling block with me. It renders the 6th article which leaves the liberty of private judgment, of none effect. This piece of machinery was the work of our old master, Laud. And what should I get by deserting him and putting my faith into the hands of a Socinian Doctor, who is full as peremptory in asserting his own interpretations as the old Archbishop, and would no more suffer me to theologise in my own way (perhaps not so much) than the Church of England does. It is remarkable that in the case of Woolston, the judges declared that they did not mean, by their sentence upon him, to preclude liberal-minded divines from debating points of theology in the way of controversy, provided it was done with decency, and without such gross offence to our common Christianity, as was given by Woolston. [See Strange's Reports.]

2. It is well known that every Clergyman of the Church of England deviates, and some of them very considerably, from the established rules of Conformity,

and the orthodox as often as any other sort. This liberty is generally speaking, neither publicly prohibited nor censured. And why shall not I avail myself of it, while it is not under any particular restraint, and be thankful for it? I read nothing that is contrary to my own judgment. My congregation know it, and find no fault; when they do, the case may differ. In the mean time the chain does not gall.

3. I had been ten years minister of this parish before I had any notion of the iniquity of imposing subscription, &c. I found myself in a situation to do some good to the people, according to my abilities, upon true evangelical principles. If I had thought of leaving them upon any private scruples of my own, I should have asked myself, where can I be equally useful in any other station? The plain answer would have been, no where. And indeed I should not have attempted to make the experiment, but should have retreated to some country retirement, and employed myself in doing good some other way, in the utmost privacy and obscurity, and have made my children good honest taylors and shoe-makers, and good christian dairy-maids, and cooks. For surely if I had thought it incumbent upon me, to spread and propagate my opinions in public, I should have begun with my own parish first, and not have suffered them to wander in errors, that might disappoint their hope of eternal life, without endeavouring to reclaim them. If they rejected my doctrine, and would not hear me, or prepared to persecute me, I should then (but not before) be justified in leaving them, and should have shook off the dust of my feet for a testimony against them. But to leave them to go astray in the wilderness, while I had no proof of their evil mind against me, or my doctrine, and to have consigned them over to a teacher espousing the same errors I had renounced, before I had used my best endeavours to convert them, would certainly have looked very like a breach of trust, of which I verily think, I could have given no very good account at the last day.

4. Before I had left my church and my flock, I should have been particularly inquisitive into the *purity* of my motives, lest there should have been among them some lurking respect to the praise of men, or an ambition of figuring before more considerable audiences. I do not believe, that three of my parishioners are judges of the points, which have moved some of my friends to withdraw from the church of England. But I believe most of my congregation to be competent judges of the terms of salvation, proposed by Jesus Christ. In preaching upon, and enforcing these terms, according to the scriptures, I may be of service to them; but if they cannot be saved without having clear and adequate conceptions of the nature of the Godhead, what must become of those millions in every nation under heaven, who fear God and work righteousness, without any of those complex ideas of the nature of God and Christ, suggested in the interpretations of the Theological Repository?

5. I chuse rather to judge of the means of christian edification, from matters of fact, than from theory and speculation. I am firmly persuaded, that a certain worthy friend of ours, did ten times more good in the parish he has left, than he has done, will, or can do, in the station he has chosen; I mean in the evangelical way. I doubt not but he thinks otherwise: for if I mistake not, he insinuates, in some of his writings, an hope (I will not say a confidence) that by his endeavours, and those of his fellow-labourers, their opinions will make their way to the general conviction of the christian world. For my part, I see no probability of it from any public appearances; unless Deism is to be reckoned among their tenets and opinions; and in that, I fear, their system must end, for reasons, I may perhaps, at some time exhibit. In the mean time, the present struggle is between *scriptural* and *rational* christianity. The Methodists pretend to the first, the Socinians to the latter. I make no scruple to say, *Utrinque peccatur:* but at present Methodism bears the bell, in no less proportion than ten for one.

6. St. Paul says, "let every man abide in the same "calling, in which he was called. Art thou called be- "ing a servant [a slave] care not for it; but if thou "mayest be free, chuse it rather." I do not think it impertinent to apply this to the case in hand. If you please, you may call me a *slave*, while I adhere to the church: I am however endeavouring by all decent and reasonable means, to make myself free, by shewing my masters, how iniquitous a thing it is to keep christians in bondage, whom Christ hath made free. I do not despair, or think that my endeavours, or those of my fellow-labourers in the church, will be finally fruitless. In the mean time, we have a claim upon the church to be heard and relieved, which they who have left her, that is to say, have made themselves free, have not. I am now actually labouring in that cause, as, if I live a few months, will appear to the public. We can receive no assistance from those who have left us. They may condemn the church; but they cannot plead for the restoration of any privileges, of which the church has bereaved them. They have relieved themselves; they have recovered their privileges in spite of her. They have no right to complain. They are not driven from her communion, by any violence or persecution: their secession is voluntary. They are permitted to enjoy their opinions without molestation, and they ought not to ask for more. And this leads me to another very material consideration.

7. If I was persuaded that I could not in conscience any longer remain in the communion of the church of England, and particularly for the reasons which some of my friends have given, I must look upon her as an idolatrous church; and I would not come out of her by halves. I would utterly renounce her, and every thing belonging to her: I would carry about with me no mark or token of any honour or advantage, I had derived from her. I would no longer write M. A. after my name. Dr. ——— would no more subscribe the Scotch Confession, than he would the Articles of the church of England. Yet he scruples not to write L.L.D. after his

name, and to be called Rabbi, in consequence of a dignity he derived from a church, which perhaps he may think to be idolatrous. But we will enquire no farther into this matter. For I believe all sects and churches have secret salvos and dispensations among their ἀπορρητα.

Lastly. To give a better reason still, for my adhering to the church of England, as distinguished from Socinianism, I will add some account of my principles, so far as any reasonable man can expect. I have always been firmly persuaded, of the pre-existence of Christ; and if I were not, I must renounce every doctrine of the New Testament, relating to him. I have held the opinion of his Divinity, with limitations according to my own ideas, which I believed to be founded on the scriptures. In this my system I have been pretty uniform, at least since the year 1758. When Mr. Lindsey's Apology came out, I read it, and thought some things in it well enough. In other passages, he seemed to me to be infirm in his proofs; chiefly owing to arbitrary interpretations, adopted from mistakes concerning the current acceptations of Greek words and expressions in the most approved Greek authors. I then read several answers to him, which, among a few tolerable hits, had a considerable mixture of weakness and absurdity. About five years ago, I know not what chance threw in my way,—A pamphlet, intitled,—*A Plea for the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in a pastoral letter, addressed to a congregation of Protestant Dissenters, at Cambridge.* The second edition: *Cambridge*, printed by and for Fletcher and Hodson, 1776. —I perused this pamphlet with care and attention, and was both surprised and concerned, to find so many of my friend Lindsey's arguments and positions, so totally subverted *a fundamentis*, provided the pleader's reasonings and authorities were well grounded. To prove this to myself, I consulted a number of the texts he had cited, and found his superstructure bottomed upon a rock. It is now six years since this pamphlet was first published. I have looked in every Newspaper, Review, Magazine, &c. I met with, and could never find an au-

swer to it, either from Mr. Lindsey, Dr. Jebb, Dr. Priestley, or even Mr. Evanson, who, I think, is one of the best writers among the Socinians, either ancient or modern. Indeed, so far as concerns the Socinians, I think it unanswerable.* And though I do not agree with him in every thing, yet I freely own his arguments and authorities, have made a considerable alteration in my sentiments, and taken away every shadow of a scruple, with respect to conformity to the church of England, so far as the divinity of Christ is acknowledged, exclusive of the jargon of Athanasius. If this creed had never appeared, I verily think the Divinity of Christ would never have been controverted. I deny not, that I was once in some doubt, how far I could, in conscience, keep my station. Somebody, who has since left the church, persuaded me to remain where I was; and as there was no point of honour in the case, and the conscientious scruple proceeding no farther than a mere doubt, I suffered a point of christian morality to have its weight. And if I had been influenced to have kept my station, by the arguments of the friend above-mentioned *alone*, I should have had reason to thank him all the days of my life. For I am very sure I should have found myself in the wrong, in deserting my post, and should have found a thousand difficulties in getting back again, if it had been at all practicable.

N. B. The pamphlet mentioned above, is the work of Mr. Robinson, pastor of a Baptist congregation at Cambridge, and one of the ablest and honestest writers in the kingdom, and author of that excellent tract, intitled *Arcana*.

* This short tract was written by Mr. B. in 1782. It appears that in the year 1785, an *Examination* of Mr. Robinson's *Plea* was published by the Rev. T. Lindsey; but without a name, and by him presented to Mr. Blackburne: we have not, however, been able to discover, that the Archdeacon's sentiments of Mr. Robinson's work underwent any change, as he recommended the serious perusal of it to some young clergymen a very few weeks before his death.

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The Use and Advantage of the Christian Principle in the Administration of Human Laws:

A

SERMON

Preached at the

ASSIZES HELD AT YORK,

March 14, 1741-2.

BEFORE

The Hon. Mr. Baron REYNOLDS.

Published at the Desire of the Gentlemen of the GRAND-JURY.

[FIRST PRINTED, MDCCXLII.]

To the Right Worshipful

HENRY DARCY, Esq.

High-Sheriff of the County of YORK;

AND TO

Sir WILLIAM LOWTHER, Bart.

FOREMAN.

Henry Thompson, Esq.	Mark Braithwaite, Esq.
William Robinson, Esq.	Joseph Stillington, Esq.
John Hutton, Esq.	Thomas Worsley, Esq.
George Nelthorpe, Esq.	Thomas Pulleyn, Esq.
Hauworth Currer, Esq.	Charles Weddell, Esq.
Thomas Norcliff, Esq.	William Stamforth, Esq.
Thomas Grimstone, Esq.	Daniel Draper, Esq.
Henry Goddard, Esq.	Richard Dawson, Esq.
Thomas York, Esq.	William Gossip, Esq.
James Gee, Esq.	John Reed, Esq.
Richard Elcock, Esq.	Henry Baines, Esq.

Gentlemen of the Grand-Jury for the said County.

GENTLEMEN,

THE duty of the preacher upon all public as well as private occasions; is so naturally confined to subjects of religion, that I know not whether the province I have had the honour to appear in before you, will bear me out in the few observations upon the nature and principles of human policy which are to be found in the following discourse; for besides my own per-

ſonal incapacities for treating upon ſuch ſubjects, it may be obſerved, that ſpeculations upon civil government have not often been favourably received from the miniſters of the goſpel: whether this has happened from the unfitneſs of the men themſelves, and any real defects in their writing, or rather from thoſe common prejudices which lay against writers of all ſorts, who are thought to go out of their way, I pretend not to determine: that it has ſo happened in fact is a ſufficient admonition to me, that I owe ſome account to the world, and to you, Gentlemen, in particular, why I have at all intermeddled in a ſubject ſo liable to exception.

The prejudices of these latter ages againſt divine revelation, (from whatever original they ſprung at the firſt) have certainly been greatly incouraged, by the principles and practices of ſome ſorts of profeſſed chriſtians; as much perhaps as by any ſtrength in objections drawn from the probability of facts, or any real difficulties in points of faith ſet forth in the goſpel.

It is not hard to conceive that the ſlavery, the hardſhips and impoſtures in the profeſſion of chriſtianity, as it is taught in the church of Rome, or the wild inferences of ſome other enthuſiaſts from ſcriptu-

ral expreſſions, may be acceſſary to as many of the untoward ſuſpicions caſt upon our common faith, as the ſubtle inſinuations of the philoſophical unbeliever: the leaſt we can ſay of the former, is, that they have made way for the more general entertainment of the latter; and by repreſenting the genius and ſpirit of chriſtianity under the diſtortions and deformities of enthuſiaſm, tyranny, and ſuperſtition, have made it look indeed improbable enough (to many perhaps who ſee not the force of other ſorts of argument) that any religion with theſe appearances ſhould come from the fountain of light and truth.

But theſe diſguiſes being taken off by the fair and impartial advocate of revelation; and chriſtianity offered to the reaſon and common ſenſe of mankind, in its native comelineſs, the infidel loſes many of his advantages againſt its authority, for want of abſurdities in the practical obligations of it to compare it withal: for theſe being once ſhewn to have a ſtronger tendency to the temporal as well as eternal happineſs of mankind than any other before them—there is a plain reaſon to be given why they ſhould be eſtabliſhed upon a more extraordinary evidence.

One expedient to avoid this conviction has been, to ſet up a rival ſcheme of morality antecedent to and independent of the

revealed will of God, and inforced by a correſponding principle originally in the mind of every reaſonable creature; but the misfortune of this ſcheme is, that for the ſake of giving it as much beauty and perfection as poſſible, the contrivers of it have been forced to make as little room for the paſſions and corruptions of mankind, as the religious enthuſiast does for their wants and infirmities.

But the more ingenuous Hobbes, who ſaw the utmoſt influence of the moral ſenſe with as much diſcernment as the wiſeſt of his ſucceſſors, ſaw likewiſe that human nature would have its depravities in ſpite of it; but in the diſaffection of his heart to the ſanctions of revealed religion, he with all his ſubtlety could find no better way of providing againſt the ill effects of them, than by throwing his citizen into the hands of an arbitrary governor.

The principles of theſe ſaving ſyſtems have by turns been examined and confuted, with great perſpicuity and ſolidity by many excellent writers of our own communion. After the labours of theſe great men, it would be an impertinent and contemptible affectation in me, and ſuch as I am, officiouſly to concern ourſelves for the truth of the chriſtian principle, where our little talents are not wanted; for us it is ſufficient to employ thoſe lights and aſſiſ-

tances, theſe excellent writers afford us, in that province which will be always left open, and which may with leſs inconvenience be intruſted to us; that is of recommending the practical duties of chriſtianity, upon the experimental evidence, that they are the ſureſt and beſt means whatever, either of correcting the vices, or aſſiſting the infirmities of human nature.

The obſervable embarraſſment of the infidel, the bigot, and enthuſiaſt, in the application of their ſeveral principles, have always appeared to me to afford great ſtrength to this argument, and (the occaſion inviting me) I have here endeavoured to apply it in the inſtance of adminiſtering human laws; in which application, if I have been led to conſider ſome general principles of civil government, I hope I may be the more excuſable, in that I have confined myſelf to ſuch only as ſeem to be the moſt obvious and the leaſt diſputable.

I am ſenſible that other cenſures may be paſſed upon me in which I ſhall not have ſo much to ſay for myſelf: however, as I know it is my duty to ſubmit the following diſcourſe to your commands, imperfect as it is, if I can but congratulate myſelf upon your favourable opinion of my good intentions, as much as I can my country upon the merit of your public ſervices (not

on this ſingle occaſion only) I ſhall find but little reaſon to be concerned for the reſt of my reputation, as a writer.

I am,

Gentlemen,

With the utmoſt reſpect,

Your moſt obliged and obedient Servant,

FR. BLACKBURNE.

THE USE AND ADVANTAGE, &c.

1 Tim. i. 8, 9.

8. *But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;*
9. *Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient:—*

The period is thus concluded:

9. *— For the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,*
10. *For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine,*
11. *According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.*

IN the institution of all reasonable human laws, there are two general conditions implied, by which the use and application of them, in all particular cases is limited and directed; one of these conditions is, that they be founded upon principles of natural equity; the other that they be suited to the circumstances and exigencies of those to whom their efficacy is intended to reach.

With respect to the first, the relations and claims which make up the rights and obligations of the natural man, are so few in number and

in themselves so simple and universal, that the ideas of natural equity are easily conceived, and perhaps in most men pretty much alike; but wherever the experience of the law-giver shews him the necessity of adapting particular institutions to the accidental situation, capacities, customs or corruptions of different sorts of men, there the reasonableness of laws will be determined by the expedience of them, and will not be limited by the few and uncompounded notions of natural justice only, but by other circumstances also of a different sort, and not always visibly corresponding with them.

Hence it is, that they who have used themselves to consider society in the abstract only, that is, with no more rights and obligations belonging to it than the natural man would bring along with him into it, often think they observe, in the execution of human laws, many disagreements with, and deviations from the strict point of equity; and from such observation do infer in some cases the iniquity, and in *all* the imperfection of them.

What slender success these partial and contracted notions of equity would have in reforming the obliquities of human laws (whatever they be) may easily be understood from the visionary and impracticable schemes of government, which certain writers both among the ancients and moderns have founded upon them: in which indeed the mistake is not that equity is laid down as the foundation of civil policy, but that it is not admitted in that extent and compass which the necessities of government require.

Another sort of men have attempted to cor-

rect or supply these defects in the laws of man by a very different expedient, but no less extravagant and injurious to the welfare of mankind, which is upon a principle that the necessity and obligation of any other law is superseded by the publication of the gospel of Christ; a principle which leaves no room for considerations of what is accidentally necessary or expedient for mankind, and on which is founded this absurd and destructive position, "*That "the public magistrate is a character utterly "inconsistent with the spirit and obligations of "christianity.*"

Whatever different effects these two contradictory extremes might have in the practical application of them to civil government, there is evidently one imperfection common to them both, which is that either the laws of nature or the laws of christianity, when applied to the uses of civil society, to the exclusion of all others, will be found to be made for the righteous only, there being no proper provisions in them for the temporal punishment of the lawless and disobedient.

But then, as it is clear on the one hand, that civil society could not subsist in any tolerable order without such provisions, so it is also evident on the other side, that no positive laws where the regards to natural equity and the influences of religion are quite left out, can either be perfect in themselves or sufficient for the ordinary purposes of government; these being so necessary ingredients, the one in the distinctions and assignment of property, the other by introducing sanctions which civil laws have

not, in strengthening those restraints which are provided against the violation of it.

That all government should be founded and administered upon principles of equity in one sense or other, is a point out of question on all sides; and the time was when it was as much out of question, that the civil rights of mankind were not sufficiently secure on this groundwork alone, without the additional cement of the religious principle: the ancient lawgivers always introducing their political institutions by explaining and inforcing the sanctions of *that* in the first place.

What these discerning sages thought thus highly expedient at the first, the experience of these latter ages under the gospel has now shewn to be necessary: the truth and foundation of religious sanctions being clearly ascertained by the revelation of the will of God in Christ, and the application of them to the purposes of society, plainly discovered by the extensive provisions in the christian religion for the temporal as well as eternal well-being of mankind.

And yet so it has happened, that men with too little or too much of this principle, placing, according to their different views, religious obligations and and civil rights in two distinct and incommunicable provinces, have in their turns claimed a separate and independent sovereignty to each of them; and, (by the means of those prejudices which seldom suffer contending parties to see either themselves or their adversaries but in the extremes of right and wrong) have set them at an irreconcileable distance.

But the great St. Paul (whose exact penetration into the nature and extent of civil rights and religious obligations may fairly be allowed to determine all disputes of this kind) seems to think very differently about them both; having on many occasions both by his practice and in his writings shewn, how easily they may be incorporated together; and on what terms and with what respects to each other they may become mutually instrumental to the great end of all laws, the safety and welfare of mankind in communities.

To this purpose is the passage I have taken for my subject, the meaning of which I shall first endeavour to open and explain, and then proceed to shew how the use of the religious principle in the administration of human laws is deducible from it.

"*We know*, says he, *that the law is good* "*if a man use it lawfully; knowing this that* "*the law is not made for a righteous man, but* "*for the lawless and disobedient.*" Now the question is, of what law St. Paul says this.

Many commentators on this passage observing some circumstances in the preceding verses applicable to the Jews alone, have understood these subsequent words of the law of Moses only; but if we admit this interpretation, it will be hard to justify the apostle's reasoning in this place; for it is to be observed, that the criminals, who are here mentioned as the objects of this law, are most of them offenders against some of the plainest dictates of natural light; such as infringe those rights and transgress those obligations which give us the first ideas of morality: now the apostle, to be con-

sistent with himself must mean, that the law is not made for the righteous man, as he stands in contradistinction to these offenders; but it being evident both from the institution and purpose of the law of Moses, that the righteousness of the jew, was made up of many particulars which had no respect to moral rectitude properly such, it will appear to be a law given in many instances, for the righteous man of St. Paul, and is not therefore the law here spoken of by him.

But to put the matter out of all dispute, the apostle having reckoned up several distinct species of crimes for which the law was made, adds, "*And if there be any other thing that is con-*"*trary to sound doctrine, according to the* "*glorious gospel of the blessed God.*" But can you imagine St. Paul would prescribe the punishments of the law of Moses as proper correctives for transgressions of the law of Christ? contrary to the whole tenour of his reasoning in all other places, where he so strongly urges the authority of the gospel law upon the jew, on many distinct proofs that his own was defective, and could only be supplied and compleated by that of Christ.

By the law then in this passage must be understood all positive laws at large, providing for the security of societies, and respecting such occasions and exigencies of them, as the influence of moral and religious obligations will not reach; and his reasoning is, that when such laws are in themselves so constituted, and in their application so administered, as to answer their original end, then they are in his

language, lawfully used, and approve themselves for good.

In these words then are implied these two propositions:

I. That the gospel of Christ was never intended for the government of civil societies in that latitude as to exclude the exercise of positive human laws. And,

II. That as in the constitution of human laws there should be an especial regard to the equity and expedience of them, so that there is also a manifest and indispensible use of the religious principle in the administration of them.

The first of these propositions is so clear from the plain construction of this passage, that it were a needless expence of time to enter into any farther argument about it; and therefore to give the whole sense of St. Paul, (and in that the doctrine of christianity) at one view concerning the necessity and expedience of human laws, I shall only add one short but satisfactory illustration of it from an instance in his own conduct.

We read that the jews under all the other circumstances of a conquered people had still a right of judicature reserved to them, within their own tribes and the prescriptions of their own law: they had apprehended St. Paul on a pretence of his introducing several innovations into the religion of their fathers; but the censures they were empowered to inflict, not answering their end, which was effectually to suppress his testimony for the gospel, and his conduct affording no sufficient grounds to make him criminal towards *them*, the matter fell of course under the cognisance of the ro-

man magistrate. Now what is the defence of this great apostle in these circumstances? Not that acting under the sovereignty and by the special appointment of Christ, he was exempted from all human jurisdiction, but that to the jews he had done no wrong, that he had said none other things than their own Moses and the prophets after him did say should come; and therefore insisting on his innocence towards them, he takes refuge from their violence and partiality in the protection of human laws, asserts his privilege of a roman citizen, and appeals to Cæsar.

But then though this was St. Paul's conduct among the jews, we should in vain look for such pleas or appeals amidst any violences offered to him by the gentiles: the reason is obvious; he had *there* none such to make; for the preaching of the gospel founded as it was on the belief of one only omnipotent and independent Deity, stood in direct opposition to an express and positive law of the gentile states in general, which was that "*every one* "*should reverence the Gods of the country*:" but then the apostle being thus out of the protection of human laws, it would lie here directly in his way to alledge the supremacy and perfection of the christian law, as superseding all human authority: and that it never was alledged by him to this purpose is an evidence without exception that no such claims were understood to belong to it.

II. The use of the christian principle in the administration of human laws, is a matter which will require a proof of another sort; for the disunion of christianity at first from the gentile

policy above-mentioned, allowing us no precedents from the conduct of the apostles, the merits of this point will soonest be determined by a short examination, what tendency there is in the practice of christian duties to supply those unavoidable defects which may be observed in the most perfect human constitutions; an examination, which may perhaps help to disentangle an argument much obscured and perplexed by the sophisms of those, who having thought fit first to deny the truth of divine revelation, have afterwards found themselves concerned in reputation to shew that mankind in all capacities may do without it.

I have before taken notice, that equity is admitted on all sides as the proper foundation of laws in general; but then it is also to be observed along with this maxim, that as laws in general respect the government of societies, the equity of them is not to be considered under that absolute and precise idea of it, discovering and prescribing only what this or that particular man might claim of natural right; in the circumstances of society, equity will have a sense relative to the interests of the whole, and many different aspects, according to those relations and exigencies, which improvements in arts and sciences, and the many alterations of property arising from them do almost infinitely multiply: this considered, it is evident that the necessities of particular governments cannot be seen all at once, and that the number and variety of necessary laws must be proportioned to the several occasions and incidents which call for them; in providing for which there will ever be this inconvenience,

that the good of the public will often accidentally interfere with the interest, and perhaps sometimes with the security of particular members of it.

Hence, and hence only, it is that we hear so much of the imperfection and obliquity of human laws, which though they give occasion to a great variety of complaints, yet upon a nearer inspection, will be found reducible to one or other of these general heads.

Either, 1. That the punishments and restraints which in the intention of the law are levelled at crimes and offences only, do often in the execution of them fall upon the righteous or the innocent.

Or else, 2. That the lawless and disobedient often find the means of escaping or evading the punishment due to their transgressions.

Let us now see what use may be made of the christian principle, towards the correcting or supplying these visible defects, or, in the expression of St. Paul, how human ordinances may become good, by being lawfully used.

If we examine these inconveniences in human laws to the bottom, it will be found that the objections founded upon them, will not so often affect the constitution of the laws themselves, as the integrity of those who seek redress from them, or otherwise fall under their cognisance; the lawgiver in providing for his community, can only direct the force of laws against those outward circumstances or appearances, which actually endanger or may probably affect the peace or the safety of the whole; and whenever these are in judgment either falsely or partially represented, the hard-

ships of the subsequent sentence can only be imputed to the iniquity of the person suppressing or falsifying the circumstances in question.

From this accident, that is from the room, which will unavoidably be left in the most perfect systems of civil laws for iniquities of this kind, the legislator received an early hint to incorporate the religious principle with his political institutions, which was indeed not only the best, but the sole remedy which either then, or now, could possibly be applied to evils of this sort, but which in the heathen policy laboured under this great defect, namely, that it went no farther than inforcing the letter of their civil laws upon stronger sanctions than temporal censures, which plainly appears from the extent of the religious character among them, to which every man was fairly intitled, who was not obnoxious to the laws of his country.

With great advantage then may we observe how peculiarly the genius, as well as the evidence of christianity, is adapted to compleat all these imperfect obligations, inlarging the duties of mankind to each other, as well as inforcing the motives to it, and extending its rewards and punishments to the dispositions of the mind, as well as to the nature and quality of outward actions: by this law not only visible injuries and offences are prohibited, but even the remotest occasions of, and approaches towards them; by this law the christian is upon the same penalties restrained from pursuing many privileges, advantages, and satisfactions to which the laws of his country might otherwise intitle him; and even where the in-

terests or the security of his brethren makes the redress of his own wrongs a point of duty to them, he is still limited by so strict obligations to truth, to meekness and moderation in the pursuit of it, as would not fail to prevent those severe evils which public justice is forced to patronize by being made to screen and cloak the private malice or avarice of iniquitous hypocrites.

Consider now the multitude and variety of incidents for which human laws are obliged to provide; the difficulties in settling disputed property, or of fixing the guilt of crimes committed in secrecy and obscurity, and the use, nay even the necessity of the christian principle to rectify the disproportions so often observed between the legal decisions, and real merits of controverted cases, will soon be seen; a disproportion which as human institutions are and must be circumstanced will ever afford matter of complaint, till they who are parties in appeals to public justice, will think themselves bound to more by some other law, than can by these be strictly required of them: that is, till men can be prevailed with to intermix with all their claims and privileges, that unaffected candour and ingenuity, that extensive charity and forbearance, that plain truth and sincerity of the gospel, which have so visible a tendency to limit and regulate the civil contentions of mankind, if not wholly to prevent them.

It is true, indeed, that these good effects can only be produced, in proportion to the influence of the religious principle upon the heart and affections: and to the want of such influence it is, doubtless, owing that no more

of them are produced; there have been however enough of them visible to give a fair occasion to the christian legislature to provide for many more than the interests and passions of contending parties will usually allow them to afford to each other; and that is by giving a latitude sometimes in the construction, and sometimes in the execution of the strict and literal expression of the written law, and thereby leaving room with the minister of justice to proportion his censures to the intrinsic reason and merits of the case, where perhaps the appearances of legal right might otherwise justify an undeserved severity.

In general the magistrate is sufficiently vindicated to the public, wherever the particulars of the evidence before him will bear him out in his sentence; but where his discretionary powers are such as allow him to admit some other probable considerations in mitigation of it, there he will also be concerned in conscience to admit the religious principle as a party in his determinations.

As the constitution of our own excellent laws has provided for these limitations with more advantage than perhaps any other in the world, so have the laws themselves been more abundantly justified in the many good effects brought forth by the discreet and conscientious administration of them upon this principle, and especially in obviating the two principal objections against the equity of human laws before mentioned.

An innocent man can never suffer but by a false or a mistaken accusation; in the former instance, perjury and prevarication are usually

driven to so many thin subterfuges, that (except in some few abandoned cases) the inward consciousness can seldom be so wholly suppressed, but that some inconsistencies will break through the best concerted falsehood; the diffidence of the mistaken but well-meaning accuser will, generally speaking, have like effects; and in both cases of what great use to the innocent the prudence and charity of the magistrate may be in urging such circumstances and presumptions, of this sort, as the case before him may admit of, I need not mention.

And indeed it is not often to be observed among ourselves, that an innocent man suffers by the laws of his country where he has but those fair advantages, which the righteous intention or construction of them will afford him: in our present circumstances the impunity of the lawless and disobedient seems to be the much better grounded complaint; the effects of it being visibly and sensibly perceived in too many instances. A grievance which perhaps may in some measure be owing to the reasonable limitations in the government of a free people, where it is to be observed that the discretionary powers of the magistrate are necessarily confined to the mitigation of punishments only, and not extended to the least aggravation of them beyond the written law; by which means it may, and no doubt, often does happen that offenders are not punished to the full of their deserts: but then certainly a government thus constituted on the genius and tempers of the gospel, can never be reasonably reproached with such limitations, till it can be shewn that the disorders and inconveniences

in question, are fewer and more tolerable where all censures are left to the arbitrary will of a despotic ruler.

But, not to dissemble the truth, the grievances of this sort among ourselves seem to arise not so much from a want of severity in the laws themselves, as to a remissness in the execution of them; would but the inferior minister of justice seasonably apply his authority to the lesser immoralities within his cognisance, they could never grow up to those monsters of violence and injustice, to which, it is a daily complaint, that no legal penalties are equal; and to which even those that are in use cannot, perhaps in a little time be safely applied; the very lowest of our people having learned to legitimate the most outrageous acts of riot and licentiousness, by some of those specious names and pretences, which our present abuse of language will (under a dextrous management) easily afford to vices and corruptions of any sort.

By this means the odium of such impunity may probably be thrown at length (where indeed it never should be thrown) upon the supreme magistrate; who, besides the hard necessities which disorders of this sort lay upon him for the present; may come to be reproached by those who feel these evils in their last extremity, for not executing the penal laws beyond their prescribed limits and extent.

To conclude. The excellence of our civil constitution, is a matter which need not be circumstantially shewn, by the application of any speculative principles, whilst we have those superior blessings to look at we have enjoyed from it, in comparison with our neigh-

bours: that the christian principle may conveniently and advantageously be incorporated with it, has I hope, in some little degree appeared from the foregoing considerations; from whence it is but too evident that the evils and errors in our government, are but the accidents of our private corruption and depravity, and which might, all of them effectually be corrected, would every man among us, by a dutiful submission to the powers in being, and a conscientious discharge of his religious and civil obligations, contribute in his station to make the best laws and the best religion in the world, mutually subservient to the great and good purposes for which they were originally instituted.

ERASMUS's PREFACE

TO HIS

PARAPHRASE

ON THE

Gospel of St. MATTHEW, and the

APOSTOLICAL EPISTLES.

Tranſlated into Engliſh with Notes.

To which is prefixed,

A PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE

ADDRESSED TO THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC GENTRY, and LAITY of GREAT BRITAIN.

The Pope's laſt words of him [*Fulgentio*] were, that "*he has* "*indeed made ſome good Sermons, but bad ones withal; that* "*he ſtands too much upon Scripture, which is a book* (quoth "he) *that if any man will keep cloſe to, he will* QUITE RUIN "THE CATHOLIC FAITH." *Father* PAUL's *Letters*, page 112. Edit. Lond. 1693.

[FIRST PUBLISHED, MDCCXLIX.]

A

DISCOURSE

ADDRESSED TO THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC GENTRY AND LAITY

OF

GREAT BRITAIN.

GENTLEMEN,

THE errand of this address is to recommend to your serious perusal a short treatise composed by one of the ablest divines your church ever had to boast of, the excellent Erasmus, who, for piety, wisdom, and learning, hath had few equals in any church.

The author's drift in this little piece is to shew, that no person whatever ought, upon any pretence, to be excluded from, or restrained in reading and studying the holy scriptures: what his arguments and reasons are, you will here see, and to these I refer you.

How his opinion touching this matter may agree with the present face of your church, I am doubtful; not because I am unacquainted with the canons of Trent, or wholly a stranger to the catholic instructions of your divines and confessors; but because I know that while the business of making converts is so much the care of your priests in England, and while they have their eyes so much upon what may scandalize their halting proselytes, it is very difficult to foresee what peculiar points of faith, doctrine, or worship, imputed to your church, they may think fit to own, or what particulars they may be commissioned to relax and dispense with to serve a present exigence.

It would not therefore surprize me, if these men should tell some sorts of you, who may not be absolutely inslaved to their dictates, and who, at the same time, may not know, that this preface of Erasmus is wholly expunged in the Spanish Expurgatory Index, that the contents of it are highly reasonable, and entirely agreeable to the sense and spirit of your own church.

If any of you, whose good sense and liberal minds make them capable judges of the subject, (and some such I have the satisfaction to know among you) should find them in this humour, be so good as to take them at their word; and whether you have their consent or not, it will surely become you, with a doctor on your side, of more weight than a thousand puny school-declaimers of the size and education of your common priests, not only to assert this christian privilege to yourselves, but to emancipate, as far as your influence will

reach, all your dependants and acquaintance from the unmanly and pernicious dread of touching a book, where only are the words of eternal life.

Take, for once, the advice of this great man; read the word of God with cool heads, single hearts, and mortified affections; if you there find the distinguishing tenets of your own church verified and supported, in the name of God abide by them; if, on the other side, you by that light discover errors, frauds, or corruptions, either in your own or any other communion, renounce them with all your hearts, and bear your testimony against them.

But while I am thus recommending sincerity to you, it would ill become me to dissemble my confidence, that so many of you as shall pursue the directions of this truly wise and pious master of christian theology, will, to a man, join yourselves to some PROTESTANT congregation; nor, being myself a member of the established church of England, will I conceal my ardent wishes, that your choice may fall upon that society of christians in particular: in this, however, fit it is you should judge for yourselves; but, at all events, make CHRIST and his Apostles the originals of whatever you think and do in the important affair of religion.

You will observe, gentlemen, that one great inducement with Erasmus to propose opening the book of God to all ranks of people, was the ignorance and corruption of the Ecclesiastics of his time: in accommodating this consideration to your own case now, you will, no doubt, perceive some difference in respect both of your foreign and domestic clergy: the Romish clergy

abroad have, much to their honour, got quit of the reproach of a gross ignorance of every thing but school-systems and Aristotelic subtilties; but, if grave and impartial writers of your own religion may be credited, they are, in morals, as loose and secular as ever: the popish clergy in England give less scandal in their lives and manners, but considered as scholars, and particularly divines, are ignorant to amazement. In these circumstances, both the one sort and the other, must find their old account in keeping the scriptures from vulgar examination; and so give this particular reason of Erasmus for your applying to them yourselves, all the force it ever had.

But having opened this prospect to you, it cannot be expected you will let us close it when, and at what point we would; you will be for looking beyond the pale of your own church for *Nepotists, pluralists, simonists, non-residents*, ambitious, covetous, contentious, ignorant, vicious and careless pastors. And, no doubt, you will find numbers of them among us: not indeed so naturally intailed (as is the case in your church) upon the particular forms and constitution of the church of England, as hangers on in every church establishment of any long continuance, on the face of the earth.

But, however, as your eyes will not be so much on the different reasons we have to give for this depravity in *our* clergy, as upon the fact itself, it will be time for us to prepare for your question, which I suppose will be this: "what shall we gain by coming over to you?"

I will tell you, gentlemen, what you will

gain: you will gain your christian liberty. The ministers of the church of England, whatever they are in themselves, cannot possibly be the least incumbrance upon the free study of the scriptures; our civil constitution will not permit them to interfere with the people in so tender a point. It is not indeed any way their interest: in the doctrines of our church there is nothing to hide or disguise; the persons of our ecclesiastics, not only for grosser scandals and immoralities, but for the least misdemeanours, are as much under the coercion of the civil power, even of a petty constable, as the laity; so that it would signify nothing to them to keep the scriptures out of sight, by way of preventing any censure upon themselves or their doctrines.

Other kinds of corruption, such as *commendams, pluralities, dispensations,* &c. &c. &c. Spots and blemishes which came out from you, and are of you, and upon which the law of the land, to the sorrow of all good men, lays so little restraint, are not however pretended to be countenanced by the gospel, or legitimated by the sacred dignity of orders; and if these things were to be duly limited, or, in four cases in every five even wholly inhibited by a wise law, I do not know one sensible and disinterested protestant in the nation, who would not think both the clergy and people much the better for it. What alteration the plenitude of the papal power and supremacy, and the exemptions of your churchmen under these wide-spreading wings, make in all this, it is superfluous to remark.

Some of this, you will say, concerns you or

your priests in England very little: here then is something that concerns both you and them more:—The youth that are educated among us for the ministry, if they fall into good hands, are not only permitted, but assisted and incouraged to pursue their studies through every branch of liberal science; to read controversies on all subjects; to write and discourse freely on those subjects; to learn the sense of by-past ages, different sects, and different men on the scriptures: by these means, if they make a good use of their time, they gain an extensive knowledge, a free course of thought, a candid turn of mind, an amiable cast of conversation, become able explainers of the word of God, agreeable companions for persons of the best sense and fashion, and good examples to all ranks of people.

If, on the other hand, for want of able, unprejudiced or diligent teachers, or through their own perverseness, idleness or incapacity, they mispend their time, or misemploy their talents, and bring nothing with them from school, or college, but habits of vice and loitering, an ignorant zeal, or an empty pride, they meet with a suitable reception. Few among us scruple to laugh at a pedant, a coxcomb, a fop, a blockhead, or a bigot, merely because he is in orders: a vicious sot, or a lewd brawler in a gown, however he crept into it, or keeps it on his back, is treated, for ought ever I could learn, with as little respect or ceremony as a tinker or pedlar of the like behaviour; and this without the least offence to the pious christian, other than what is taken at the man himself, and without any other damage

to true religion, than what the toleration of unfit men in the ministry may occasion any where.

Very different is all this with you: the popish priests that are dispersed over England along with every chance of bad dispositions, bad habits, and natural incapacities common to all sorts of men, are deprived of the advantages of improving better talents by the nature and train of their education: they are cramped and confined in their studies abroad, with a sole view to the english mission; prohibited every book but what carries the most exceptionable parts of your superstition to the most extravagant height, kept in a blind veneration for, and obedience to the Pope, the church, and their respective superiors, and sent over to this country as great bigots, and, in respect of any useful knowledge, as great dunces as the meanest of their flock.*

This is bad enough, but it is not the worst; for whatever the men themselves are in head or in heart, you, gentlemen, must receive them, live with them, bear with them, cringe to them, and pay them all the homage and deference that is due to, and a great deal more than would be expected by the wise and the worthy.

Many of our people greatly wonder, that so many sensible persons among you should pay

* For proof of this it is sufficient to appeal to their performances. It cannot be supposed the papists employ their worst hands in writing for the cause: And if the *Catholic Christian instructed*, the *Dialogues* between *Archibald* and *Timothy*, *Pasquin* and *Marforio*, the *Dunkirk* and *Luxembourg Dialogues*, *&c. &c.* come from their *best*; it is not hard to guess at the bran, by the scent and hue of the flour.

all this regard to men of this character; and the rather, as it seems to be no grievance to you, inasmuch as you frequently reproach the protestant laity with their indifference to their church and clergy; but so wonder not I: you think, no doubt, to find your principal account in the services of this kind of operators; they are the fittest tools in the world, to lead captive silly women, and illiterate men, laden with divers lusts. In these vile and wicked arts no man of learning and probity would waste his time, or prostitute his abilities: in the mean while the nonsense of your present priests, (to borrow an expression of King Charles II.) suits the nonsense of the vulgar; and for the rest, a prudent layman, who is not within hearing of the inquisition, enjoys much convenience in having no wiser men to direct his conscience, and intrude into his concerns, of which some notable instances might be given.

We are told, "that, in the papers of Shel-"don, Superior of the jesuits, seized in No-"vember 1745, there are proofs of commands "being obeyed, when gentlemen of the first "rank, and their chaplains, have both been "averse to a separation, and that none are "allowed to chuse their own priests, nor re-"tain them longer than is agreeable to the "pleasure of the Superior."*

If this be fact, all appearances are easily solved. They who think fit to submit to these commands, (and all it seems who will have chaplains must submit to them) will of course tender all exterior reverence to those venerable

* *Enquiry into the behaviour of our great Churchmen*, p. 20.

spies upon their conduct, at the same time that they will be upon their guard to the uttermost, even with the chaplains they may like best, and be extremely cautious how they put the least confidence in men, who, they know, are under a prior obligation to betray them, whenever the Superior calls for an account of their clerical labours, or, (what indeed is ten times more their business in England) their secular remarks.

In these circumstances we may blame you, but ought not to be so much surprized at you for attempting to introduce a French Government, if you have any hopes that it would bring along with it the freedom of the Gallican church; your wily directors have put a yoke upon you, which the freer Frenchmen despise and disdain, and which must be the more insupportable and reproachful, for being worn in a land of liberty.

But however you are supplied with them, it is probable some of you will urge your objections to the free and unlimited study of the scriptures, from considerations independent of your particular deference for your teachers; and to these, on the behalf of the author we are recommending to you, it is fit we reply.

The capital argument in your church for withholding the scriptures from the people is, "That the unrestrained reading of them, oc-"casions heresies, sects and schisms; great "inconvenience to the church in general, and "great scandal to pious christians, zealous for "truth and unity in particular; 'that this li-"berty hath made way for the impious and au-"dacious attempts of infidels to subvert chris-

"tianity itself; and consequently that noth-
" ing can be good, which is naturally produc-
" tive of so much evil."

To this the divines of our church have contented themselves with answering, " that (however it comes about) your church is as much subject to these heresies and schisms as our own: and appeal to the history of *jansenism*, of the *immaculate conception*, and others; and observe, that these divisions in a church pretending to infallibility, hath occasioned as much infidelity, and a cruder sort of atheism, than is to be found among us: which is particularly true in Italy."

But this way of recrimination, though it may stop mens mouths for the present, yet, I own, in the present case is not satisfactory to me: these divisions among you certainly arise from reading either the scriptures or something else, which your church-leaders would I suppose, suppress if they could: and though they can never succeed in wholly suspending mens inquiries, yet (if the secreting and prohibiting methods be the best way to promote true christain edification) so far as they can procure the church's simple dictate to take place without examination, they will certainly be righter in taking away the key of knowledge, than we in leaving the door open.

This being granted then, the true question to be decided is, whether this unlimited liberty of reading the scriptures be really hurtful to the interests of christianity, or pernicious to the welfare of the true church of Christ? *that* church into which protestants pretended, at least, to retreat when they left yours: for the interest and welfare of any other church either

does not, or should not concern those to whom this objection is made.

We may therefore safely allow, that this liberty of reading hath in fact produced a sort of men, called by some of us, and all of you, sectaries and schismatics, and even infidels; that it hath occasioned divisions and controversies, which, in several countries, have had but an unfriendly aspect towards the church there established whatever it is: in particular, it hath thrown us here in England into circumstances which you, gentlemen, enjoy with great exultation, hoping, no doubt, that our divisions and convulsions will, in due time, make an opening large enough for you and yours, statesmen and churchmen, one and all, to enter in and take possession; so also are some among us disposed to think, whose courage and understanding upon other occasions need no voucher.

And so far indeed I can come into this notion, as to believe that whenever our iniquities, either as a church, or a civil society, are full, the vengeance cannot be executed by severer instruments than a Pope, and a Prince in his dependance.

There is too in the spirit of popery something extremely proper to chastise our peculiar follies and iniquities; in the fore-front of which I reckon our likeness to you in so many respects; our neglect and contempt of the solid edification of Christ's houshold for the sake of a few forms of no real use, and of not much significance; our fierce contention for rights and powers which quench the spirit and disappoint the influence of true christianity; our encouragement, and even courtship of you, whose

religion is at utter enmity with all moral principles, and even with the common sense of mankind; our discouraging wise, able and upright men only for being farther removed from you; and by all this strange conduct affording you opportunities you never could otherwise have had, of spreading your poison through the land, and alienating the minds of unthinking people from the best and wisest princes with which the throne of Britain was ever filled.

These indeed are follies and iniquities which, in a natural course of things, seem to point you out for our chastisers; but forasmuch as neither you nor we have a key to the methods and operations of the Divine Providence, (which, as we learn from many signal records and facts, often brings about its ends by the most unlikely means) even these unpromising and hopeless appearances, may, for ought either of us know, be more generating the "fall of BABYLON the "great, the mother of *Catamites, and abo-"minations of the earth."

For be not deceived, gentlemen, these circumstances of disagreement among us, arising from the free study of the scriptures, with all those untoward consequences at which you rejoice, and better christians lament, may not have at the bottom any tendency at all in your favour; and as this is a matter of great importance, give me leave to examine it with a little particularity, beginning with—

The Deistical scheme of discrediting christianity, of which you hope to reap the fruits,

* See Joseph Scaliger's note on Rev. xvii. 5. where he shews that ωρνων should be thus accented, and rendered by *Catamites*.

by its driving men to the necessity of recurring to the repose of an infallible judge.

What other people may apprehend from this I know not; for my own part, I have as yet, seen no effects of these infidel performances, which can tempt me to wish, that their authors had spared themselves the pains of writing, or us the mortification of reading their books.

Who that hath examined and considered the current learning on the collective evidence for christianity arising from prophecy and miracles, as it stood a century and a half ago, would want the invaluable labours of our Bently, Chandler, Sherlock, Warburton, Jortin, Chapman, Conybeare, Leland, and an hundred more, on the poor condition of being rid of a Collins, a Tindal, a Morgan, or a Chub—the last of whom, as appears by his posthumous works, died mumbling a thistle he could neither digest nor swallow, and left a deplorable instance to his surviving coadjutors, how nearly their principal magazines were drawn to the very dregs.

In the several distresses to which these men have been reduced by the great lights of the protestant churches, it is no obscure or precarious surmise, that they have received, and are still receiving, considerable assistance from the popish priests of the english mission: it is notorious, that the deists have taken into their pay the tattered regiments, heretofore employed by your bigotted churchmen to ruin the authority of the scriptures, in order to plant their respectable legends and decretals in their room: popery expects to reap what infidelity is sowing; and in this expectation, is it surprizing that

popish engineers should apprise the infidels of the use of their borrowed arms, and even, on proper occasions, play their artillery for them?

The ends, indeed, they severally drive at, look much asquint at each other from opposite quarters; the one being to reduce mankind to chains and slavery, the other to break down the most reasonable fences of society, and to turn the human species loose and wild: in opposition to both these projects, the light and strength of divine revelation is on either hand an unshaken barrier, in the demolition of which both parties find their reasons to concur, each, probably, in the meantime esteeming the other the dupes of their own policy.

That your emissaries are now actually employed in the execution of this convention, there is one remarkable circumstance of proof. The deists, from the time they gave an account of their rise and growth, affected to complain of the civil magistrate, with broad insinuations of what great things they could bring forth, if this bugbear were out of the way, or if he would hold his hand; his hand he held; still they went on in the same strain of complaint, without one stripe from the rod of civil power (that I can remember) except what fell upon Woolston, for crude blasphemies of the grossest kind. But all of a sudden in one or two of their last pamphlets, particularly aimed at the authority of the scriptures, the language is altered, and we are surprized with strained and fulsome compliments on the liberty of the GEORGIAN age; an insulting sneer! absolutely unnatural from the pen of an ingenuous deist, who, secure of his own dear person and property, would con-

tent himself with the privilege of venting his imaginations, without alarming the waspish bigots, by too glaring a prospect of the lenity of the prince, who permitted it; an insult, however, quite characteristic, and extremely adapted to the purposes of the popish priest, as serving to remind the grumblers and disaffected of the much greater dignity and benefits of a jacobite government, where nothing would be suffered to see the light but staunch and orthodox positions.

On this occasion I cannot pass by a late pleasant *contretemps* of one of these knights of the double face, which hath by no means turned to the account either of his real or his borrowed cause.

This writer having opened his case with what Mr. Warburton very properly calls *the common dog-trot of infidelity*, was unluckily, one hardly knows how, brought in view of Dr. *Middleton's Introductory Discourse* and *four queries*. The poor man could keep his patience no longer, off flew the mask, and to it he went with all the little quibbles he could pick up to maul this irreverend demolisher of oral tradition.*

The advantages, gentlemen, gained by all this to christianity in general, and the protestant religion in particular, are considerable: in the first place, by the labours of these able men, which the cavils of the deists have made necessary, and which we might otherwise have wanted, new lights are struck out upon the

* See *A Letter to Gilbert West, Esq. &c. printed for Dodsley*, 1748.

grand dispensation of God in his revelations to mankind; and new evidence hath accrued to the authenticity of the records which have conveyed the accounts of these revelations to us. In the next place, the management of the controversy on the infidel side, by aids and arguments borrowed from popery, have shewn us, that the deistical scheme being incompatible with the nature and condition of the human kind, as abundantly appears by their whole history, there is no other event to be looked for from it, but a final recourse to a living, infallible judge; to which the improvements of science, and the decay of ancient prejudices are daily rendering the intelligent and sober part of the world more and more averse: the consequence is, that you have none to reckon on among us but the profligate and the ignorant, who, assure yourselves, never brought any substantial strength to the party they took occasion to join.

Our disputes with the protestant dissenters (another of these ill effects ascribed to the free study of the scriptures,) do not indeed open so immediate a prospect of planting your faith among us; inasmuch as both parties, whatever objections they make to each other, agree in strenuously disowning and reprobating your distinguishing tenets; you are not, however, here it seems without comfort, in the plain proof, that the dispositions of the several combatants towards each other, will not suffer them to exert themselves in concert against you; which must of consequence weaken the protestant cause. Hitherto indeed this hath been the consequence, and sincere protestants on all

sides have heartily lamented it; but even from hence arise some fair gleams of hope, that we are gaining an advantage by the dispute, which by God's good providence, may in due time give the *Coup de grace* to all remains of credit, which your superstition hath left among us.

And that is the discovery of such exceptionable parts of our ecclesiastical establishment, as are said and thought to bear too near a resemblance to your superfluous and superstitious institutions and of which your own writers have occasionally, but with no great policy, reminded us.

The zealous champions of the dissenting cause, provoked by the peevish contumely of the hot men on our side, have indeed objected several things to the church of England, so unreasonable as even to disgust the sober, moderate, and judicious part of their own communions; but they have also objected many others, so important and to the purpose, as, in their turn, to leave deep impressions, with many pious and upright men, of our own clergy.

Among these unreasonable objections I reckon the reproach, that much of our common-prayer is borrowed from your missals; whereas they well know, that we justify nothing in it by any such precedents, but appeal, for our liturgical matters, to the earlier forms and customs of the christian church supposed to be free from those imputations we lay at your door.

But however, if having said this in our defence, it should be suggested, that there are particulars in our service or discipline that are unscriptural, or otherwise grievous and disagreeable to the spirit of christianity, it should

seem that we can carry this kind of apology no farther: we do not pretend to say, the ancient fathers, or the churches in their government, were infallible; and where they were manifestly wrong in their forms, doctrines, or practices, fit it is that there we should leave them. Why then do not the dissenters put their objection upon this single bottom? the reason is plain; they are themselves yet in the cloud of this primitive prejudice, and ready enough to appeal to the authority of the fathers, when a particular point requires it.

And this indeed is the true secret of the bitter variance which hath so long divided the protestant churches in England: both sides have appealed to fathers, who have accordingly justified both, whilst neither of the appellants seem to have considered, that, other circumstances being equal, such a contrariety of authorities afford the best argument imaginable for setting them all aside.

But, blessed be God, the free study of the scriptures is now wearing off this common prepossession apace. The successive labours of *Daillè*, *Le Clerc*, *Barbeyrac*, *Whitby*, and *Middleton*, have insensibly discredited this implicit and indiscriminate veneration for the fathers; and by shewing us the men and their communication, have given us a truer estimate of their use and value; and on this are founded the hopes I expressed above, that the period may be at no great distance, when protestants will apply to the fountain head, and wash away every stain and superfluity that sticks to their worship, their doctrine, or their discipline, by the pure and living waters of the gospel.

The just sentiments and christian spirit of many of our eminent churchmen, though for the present perhaps controuled by the contrary tempers and prejudices of a majority, yet seem to promise a speedy succession of candid and equitable men in the church, considerable enough to recommend an impartial revision of our ecclesiastical affairs to those, who have proper authority to promote and encourage it; and whenever that happy day shall come (for which numbers of good christians offer up their daily supplications to God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed) assure yourselves, gentlemen, the harvest of your priests cannot last long. Their sole advantages consist in the ignorance, the immorality and divisions of our people; and these, a firmer union of protestants, a more early and effectual instruction in good principles, and all due incouragement given to virtue, integrity and industry (the great ends proposed by the regulations in question) would certainly take out of their hands.

After all, you may perhaps tell me, that I am reckoning without my host, and that proceeding all along upon the supposition of your being prohibited the use of the scriptures, I am shamefully caught in my ignorance of your circumstances; you will say, that papists have the scriptures in the language of the several countries where they reside, and consequently that you have them in english.

But you will be pleased, gentlemen to reflect, that it is the last case only, viz. that of english papists that I am now considering; in which

you are to be taken with such limitations as men dispatched out of the schools and convents of the jesuits, (who have principally the care of the english mission) think fit to put upon these your privileges.

In the last century a translation of the new testament (commonly called *the Version of Mons*) was published by the gentlemen of *Port Royal.* The best scholars and judges in France approved it, and still use it. But as those translators were highly obnoxious to the jesuits, the latter took all occasions to rail, write and preach against this version with all that virulent declamation, which they think fit to call, *anti-heretical eloquence.* But as in all these controversies these zealous fathers have had with that learned society, they have been most shamefully baffled, so in this more remarkably.* The version kept its ground, and keeps it to this day.

I will now, gentlemen depend upon your candour for an answer to the following queries: most of the english gentry of your communion, undoubtedly understand the French tongue: is then this version permitted to be freely used and read among you? Have you any accurate and fair english translation of it for the use of those who do not understand the French? Is it so much as known to above one in ten of you that there is such a version at all? Have you any english translation, but in such circumstances as Mr. *Serces* hath described in his book called *Popery an enemy to scripture?* or are the scriptures in any language al-

* See *Critique Generale de l'Hiſtoire du Calviniſme.*

lowed to be read and studied among you without the directions, and out of the eye of your chaplains and confessors? in one word, are not all the versions now permitted among you modelled (as the vulgate latin by the care of Sixtus V. and Clement VIII.) to the decrees of the council of Trent?

Your priests, indeed, with an assurance that supplies the place of all other talents, have attempted to retort upon protestants this charge of mistranslating, misquoting and moulding the scriptures to favour what they please themselves with calling their heresies; but surely a vainer undertaking never came into any mens heads; the whole world is witness, that the english protestant divines never scruple to find fault with their own authorized translation, whenever it appears to deviate from the genuine sense of the original: they have been more than commonly industrious to collect all the various readings of the several MSS. of the scriptures which could be come at; and, among others, have collated all the ancient copies of the latin vulgate they could meet with: they scruple not to propose conjectural emendations of the text, where the sense and subject matter seem to require it; and that none of this is done with a sinister view of making way for their own peculiar opinions, appears by their frequent, public and repeated invitations to scholars of all degrees and denominations to publish such observations upon the scriptures, as may have occurred to them in the course of their studies: and it is now one great article of the revisal I have mentioned above, that we may have a still more accurate version of the scrip-

tures for the use and instruction of our common people.

If any the like laudable and ingenuous endeavours to open and explain the word of God, have been used by learned men of your communion abroad (which indeed is not to be denied) would it not become you gentlemen, to enjoy the good example, to avail yourselves of the fruits of their labours, at least if you undervalue, despise, or suspect those of protestants; and to do that for yourselves, which your present priests cannot, will not, or dare not do for you, and for that reason would persuade you ought not to be done at all?

A little acquaintance with the modern history of your own church would convince you, how necessary it is to qualify yourselves to be your own judges in matters of religion, which you cannot do so well, as by a frequent and unbiassed reading of the word of God. The *Tramontane* doctors, in treating of the Pope's authority, meet with little regard in France; the five propositions of Jansenius were condemned at Rome by a formal papal bull: the jansenists got quit of this censure by denying the Pope's infallibility in matters of fact; which they so managed as to reduce the opposite party to own, that one is not obliged to believe that the five condemned propositions were to be found in Jansenius's book.* The Gallican church, it seems, deny the infallibility, *quoad facta*, of popes and councils together; and have exemplified their opinion by opposing the papal

* Bayle *Critique Generale*, Vol. II. page 232. *Edit. Amsterdam.* 1714.

decrees in many instances.—May not this reasonably induce you to suspect, that some of your doctrines, (Transubstantiation for instance) are not to be found in the scriptures, notwithstanding the decisions of Rome and Trent? and will not this bear you out in examining whether they are or not?

There is one more objection, gentlemen, to all I have said, or all that can be said upon the subject, which I have heard much insisted on among your zealous partizans, when other arguments have failed them; and that is, that "The english catholics are much better people in their lives and manners, than the english protestants, of the established church especially:" but why, *of the established church especially?* when there are numerous sects of protestant dissenters, over all which indeed if you can make out the advantage you speak of, it may suggest, that your english system of popish religion may be better for the purpose of practical christianity, than others, even popish systems in other countries; but you well know, that upon this comparison, you must be losers; and consequently that the objection itself affects the church of England no otherwise, than as the authority and emoluments of an established church, attaching to itself a larger number of members, it must needs take along with them a greater proportion of human frailty and corruption. I say not this to avoid entering into the truth of the fact, which from the most disinterested observation I have been able to make, I am persuaded is far from being what you represent it*, even in respect of our estab-

* We have been lately entertained with accounts of very Catho-

lished church. But how shall this be proved but by an examination into the private lives and characters of particular persons, whom neither you nor we have any right or authority to judge? In the mean time, the sorts of people you are gaining from us are not likely to strengthen this argument: they are the reproach, not of this or that church, but such as, in their lives, manners and sentiments, are a scandal to christianity itself; and you must take and keep them, such as they are, if you will have them at all.

I have now, gentlemen, but one or two observations to make relative to the character of the great man, whose work I am here recommending to your perusal.

Some people are of opinion, that ERASMUS died a Lutheran; I am not of this number, but believe he lived and died in sincere communion with the church of Rome. For besides what Mr. Bayle hath brought to prove it in his article, *Remark* T. there is a passage in an epistle of his to Reuchlin (with whom we may be sure he did not dissemble) that gives us his sentiments very particularly, and which I shall set down in english:—"You see the fatal tragedy that is "now acting, the catastrophe of which is uncer-"tain; whatever it be, I pray that it may tend "to the glory of Christ, and the interest of "evangelical truth. I had rather be a specta-"tor of this scene than an actor in it; not that "I would refuse to undergo any danger in the "business of Christ, but because I perceive

Ric *Tartuffes*, &c. which shew, that an english papist's virtue and christianity behind the curtain, is no better proof than a protestant's.

" the business itself to be above my slender ta-
" lents." And a little lower, speaking of Reuchlin's disputes with the Jacobines, he says —" I have been always careful to separate " Luther's cause from yours and that of good " letters, seeing that espousing the first would " expose us to the common hatred, and do him " (Luther) no sort of good. Other people " think otherwise, and these have loaded me " with so much envy, that I was almost taken " in the snares of those who have conspired " against good literature and the gospel. It " is not unknown what these men aim at, and " that they may succeed in it, they invent " specious names, and provoke the most gen-
" tle disposition of the Pope, that they may " make a gain of his misfortunes." By this it plainly appears Erasmus was in no readiness to take on with the Lutherans.

The plain truth is, that he and some others like him, were at that juncture in great hopes, that the stir Luther had made might have very good effects, and bring about an effectual reformation without unhinging the polity of the church, and incouraging what he elsewhere calls *seditiosa veritas:* one would scarce believe so great a man saw not on what the roman church is founded; which in indeed is upon a ground-work absolutely inconsistent with all reformation; yet it is certain that this he did not see.

And it is a mistake, which ought not to be too severely censured in him, inasmuch as we learn from a very remarkable fact, that it was also the mistake of our first reformers in England. The 22d article of our church was at first word-

ed thus: "The doctrine of schoolmen concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of relicks, as also of invocation of saints, is a fond thing, &c."—"These errors, says bishop Burnet, were not so fully espoused by the body of the roman church, when those articles were first published, so that some writers that softened matters, threw them upon the schoolmen; and therefore the article was cautiously worded in laying them there: but before these that we now have were published, the decree and canons concerning the mass had passed at Trent, in which most of the heads of this article are either affirmed or supposed; though the formal decree concerning them was made some months after these articles were published."—— From that time the mistake has been rectified, and now both you and we acknowledge them for romish doctrines.

Little did Erasmus perceive, that these fond things were so intimately woven into the constitution of the roman church, that they were become essential to her: he laid them all upon the schools and cloisters, which were excrescencies that he thought might be pared off without wounding the church; otherwise he must, upon his own principles, have left her. Hear what he says of these precious doctrines: "In the mean time we live like wild beasts mutually preying upon each other, and along with these deeds [viz. of lust, avarice, ambition, envy, hatred, &c.] we promise ourselves heaven, where is the most consummate peace and perfect charity. And upon

" what assurance do we promise it? Because
" we have confessed ourselves once in the hour
" of death; because we have bought the Pope's
" diploma, which delivers from purgatory;
" because being a dying we order many mag-
" nificent rites (masses) to be performed for
" us when in our graves; because we have
" hired somebody in our stead to visit *Jerusa-*
" *lem*, *Peter's threshold* or *Compostella*, not
" to mention other things still more impertí-
" nent than these; of which sort is that, where
" the dying man thinks himself safe, if he may
" but be buried in the habit of a franciscan,
" or dominican monk. Whence, I beseech
" you, is there such ignorance in christians?
" Truly because we read not the gospel, or if
" we read it, we read it idly, and without at-
" tention?"

But had Erasmus out-lived the council of Trent, and seen what wild work was there made, and how, and by whom, what would have been his religion then? let your Spanish index inform you, which hath made him so black and blotted an heretic.

But, however, gentlemen, that I may not leave him under the influence of so violent a prejudice, I shall conclude this address with a testimony of one of your popes in his behalf, which being attested under* the fisherman's ring, will, I hope, be considered by you, as little short of a determination *ex Cathedrâ*; not to mention the comparative merit of this particular pontiff, in respect of some of his successors, who were differently disposed.

* Poſtſcript to his Paraphraſe on St. John's Goſpel at the end.

" *To our beloved Son* ERASMUS *of* Rotterdam,
" *Professor of Theology.*

" LEO. P. P. X.

" *Beloved Son, Health and Apostolical Benediction.*

" YOUR lucubrations on the new testament, " already published for the first time, greatly " delighted us, not so much for that they are " dedicated to us, as that they are excellent " for their uncommon and signal erudition, " and are highly esteemed in the account of " all learned men. We did not a little rejoice " to hear, that these were lately revised by you, " and inriched and illustrated with many ad- " ditional annotations; conjecturing from the " first edition what this other will be, and what " advantage it will procure to the studious in " sacred theology, and to our orthodox faith: " go on with prosperity in this disposition, and " consulting the public utility, do your ut- " most diligence that this sacred work may be " published. A reward worthy of your labours " you will receive from God himself; from us " you will have your deserved commendations, " and from all faithful christians perpetual " praise. Given at Rome at St. Peter's under " the ring of the fisherman, the 10th day of " September in the year 1518, in the sixth year " of our pontificate."

I am, Gentlemen,

Your sincere well-wisher,

And humble servant, &c.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following translation appears under many disadvantages; it was injoined at first as an exercise to a young latinist designed for orders, without any thoughts of publication; when that was determined, the translator having given the Author's plain, and for the most part, literal sense, it was thought proper rather to pass his inaccuracies of style, than to render the fidelity of the version suspected or disputable by a paraphrastical expression of Erasmus's *thoughts in politer terms. The latin copy too, the best that could be had, was but incorrectly printed; and indeed the work itself seems to have been drawn up by the Author in some haste, and, as he tells us himself, at the desire of the Printer; not to mention the frequent ambiguities and abrupt transitions, where the subject was growing too tender to be farther handled. On these accounts it is hoped the candid reader, considering that it is the importance of the subject, and not the art or dexterity of the composition, that is recommended to his notice, will make the requisite allowances for the homeliness of the dress in which it appears.*

ERASMUS's PREFACE

TO HIS

PARAPHRASE on St. MATTHEW's Gospel, and the APOSTOLICAL Epistles.

I REMEMBER, good reader, that I have elsewhere testified how widely I differ from those who think that laics and illiterate persons should be wholly excluded from reading the holy scriptures, and that none should be admitted to these sacred recesses but a few men worn out for many years in the Aristotelic philosophy and school divinity.*

I will not for the present contend with them who judge these to be more especially fit to read and explain the sacred volumes in as much as they bring with them a mind exercised in human learning: be this granted, upon condition that they shall have touched upon this learning with discretion and moderation, and at a com-

* *Adyta.* The words *adyta*, *myſterium*, *myſticus*, &c. are applied by Eraſmus to the ſcriptures, no otherwiſe than either 1. as they were actually ſecreted from the people by the eccleſiaſtical doctors of thoſe times; or 2. as they were in themſelves ſacred and venerable; which uſe of the words he borrowed, (as all Latin writers of his time did) from Pagan authors ſpeaking of their own religious affairs. That Eraſmus did not think the ſcriptures in general *myſterious* in the ſenſe of *difficult* or *obſcure*, this whole diſcourſe is a ſufficient argument.

petent age, that they are not grown old in it, that they do not ascribe too much to it, that there be not a supercilious and blind self-love, that the eye be single and pure with which God is seen in the mystical scriptures, and that the mind be unpolluted with worldly affections from which the heavenly spirit withdraws itself.

In other respects the scribes and pharisees kept the holy scriptures well enough, and being asked concerning Christ, instantly produced a testimony out of the prophets, being demanded concerning the chief precept of the law, they answered pertinently: even Caiaphas himself uttered a prophecy concerning the redemption of the world by the death of Christ:* but seeing, they did not see, because they had eyes blemished with envy and hatred; hearing they did not hear, because they had ears obstructed with the filth of evil concupiscence; understanding they did not understand, because they had a mind obscured with the darkness of ambition and avarice; nor did any more obstinately resist Christ, than they who had especially the keeping of those books, in which he was promised, and shadowed forth.

But a perfect acquaintance with the sacred scriptures is not therefore to be condemned, because some by their own perverseness turn that to their destruction, which in its own nature is good and wholesome.

Allowing, then, the first rank to such as these in the province of teaching, I do not see why novices † should be driven (as profane persons from sacred rites) from the evangelical scriptures

* Mat. xxii. 42. Luke x. 27. John xi. 51.

† *Idiotæ*. Though we use the term *Idiot* in english, for a *natural fool*, it hath not that meaning in the Latin. Erasmus supposes

especially, which were published equally to the learned and to the unlearned, to the Greeks and Scythians, to servants as well as freemen, to women as well as men, to the common people no less than to kings. What these scriptures teach equally belongs to all, what they promise concerns every one alike: and they were so published as that they may be sooner understood by a pious and modest novice, than by the arrogant philosopher.

It is the part of the jews who were conversant only with shadows to conceal their mysteries from the people; the light of the gospel will not endure to be suppressed.

Formerly the priest alone entered into the holy of holies. But when at the death of our Lord the veil of the temple was rent, the access was opened to all, even as far as Christ himself, who is the true holy of holies, and the sanctifier of all; and he being lifted up from the earth, who would have all to be saved, draweth all unto him.*

If a woman or a shoemaker talk of the holy scriptures, it is cried out on as an unseemly thing: but for my own part I had rather hear some girls talk of Christ than some of those whom the vulgar esteem the greatest rabbins. Why are we more hard-hearted than the jews? They suffered the child Jesus to ask and to answer questions in the midst of the doctors, when as yet they suspected nothing divine in him.†

these *Idiotæ* both able to read, and capable of instruction; it is therefore properly enough translated by the word *novice* or *new beginner*.

* Heb. ix. 7. Matthew xxvii. 51. John xii. 32.

† Luke ii. 46. Mark x. 14.

He himself rebukes his disciples, because they forbad children to come unto him; *for of such*, says he, *is the kingdom of heaven.* Therefore let not us drive away the little ones from reading the gospel: perhaps Jesus will vouchsafe to embrace them, and to touch them with his sacred hands, and to bless them. It was the children that sang a grateful hosanna to the Lord in despite of the pharisees.* Out of this sort he chose the disciples of his evangelical philosophy, not only fishermen, and illiterate persons, but also such as were by nature of a slower capacity, which appears by many instances in the gospel history. For these little ones he gives thanks to his father: *I thank thee, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes:*† that is, according to the judgment of the world, unto fools.

Often times they who are most contemptible in the world, are with Christ of the greatest value, and they whom the world esteems most learned, are with Christ mere novices. Of these Paul speaks writing to the Romans,—"*They "grew vain in their imaginations, and their "foolish heart was darkened, professing themselves wise they became fools.*"‡

Nor have I said these things with any design to detract from the authority of good teachers, or to encourage all the unlearned to assume to themselves the knowledge of sacred scripture, and, confiding in their own judgment, to despise their ecclesiastical teachers.

* Mat. xxi. 15.
† Luke x. 21. ‡ Rom. i. 22.

Human wisdom hath its supercilious pride, but the ignorance of novices hath it also with no less arrogance.

Paul doth not allow a woman to speak in the ecclesiastical assembly, not even for the sake of learning; and he reproves *silly women laden with sins, ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth.** On the other hand St Jerom exhorts virgins, widows, and wives to read the sacred volumes, and yet he complains that the profession of this learning is pretended to by the unworthy in many places: "This "knowledge saith he, the prating old woman, "the doating old man, the declaiming sophist, "*this*, all take upon them, pull in pieces, and "teach before they know how to speak."

But so far am I from approving this arrogant profession of scripture knowledge in the vulgar laity, that I do not think it tolerable even in men of learning; for what is more arrogant, than for a man to profess himself a teacher of divine things?† But as this profession is with too little modesty usurped by the learned, so do I not think that any should be prohibited from a sober and godly search, and especially into such things as tend to better our lives; and seeing that a great variety of delicacies grow in these gardens, let every one take thence what is most for his advantage.

Let us consider what auditors Christ himself had: were they not a promiscuous multitude, and in this multitude, the blind, the lame, beg-

* 1 Tim. ii. 12. 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7.

† Erasmus means this of the pompous and ostentatious titles of graduates in divinity in the universities of Germany and elsewhere: and which the extreme ignorance of the men who assumed them, made ridiculous as well as arrogant. See *Epist. obscur. Virorum.*

gars, publicans, centurions, mechannics, women and children? Will he take it ill to be read by those, by whom he was desirous to be heard. With my consent indeed, the husbandman shall read, the smith shall read, the stonecutter shall read, harlots and bawds shall read, and lastly the Turks themselves shall read. If Christ does not banish these from his voice, neither will I banish them from his books. How do you know but that may happen to them by practice, which happened to the Eunuch?*

Among the books of the old testament perhaps there are some, from which there may be be some reason to restrain the unlearned. Such as *Ezekiel*, and the *Canticle of the spouse*, and almost all the books of the old testament; forasmuch as in these the seeming absurdity of the history, or the obscurity of the parables may often disgust the reader. But neither would I prohibit the reading of these to any. They will certainly reap this fruit from it, that they will come better instructed and prepared to sermons :† and will listen more willingly to things with which they are a little acquainted, and will understand that with more ease of which they have already had though ever so little a foretaste.

But however in the books of the new testament the divine wisdom wonderfully lets itself

* Acts viii. 27.

† The author is not clear in stating the objection in this paragraph: it is by no means equally forcible against almost all the books of the old Testament, though it may be against here and there a passage in each: accordingly in answering it he considers none but such passages; for the unlearned reader must here be told, that the popish teachers of those days chose to exercise their wits upon the obscurest passages

down even to the capacity of the very meanest: so that no body can be so unlearned, but he may be docible to the evangelic philosophy. Let there be but a mind, ever so uninstructed, if it be single, pure and free from those cares and lusts which render even the most learned indocible to Christ.

Let the novice before he takes the gospel into his hands prepare himself for the reading of it by a short prayer: let him pray that the blessed Jesus, who died even for the most despicable men, would vouchsafe to impart his spirit, which resteth *not but upon the humble and meek and him that trembleth at his word:* and incouraged by the advice of St. *James, if any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not;* let him say with the Psalmist, *open thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy law;* and also that, *I am thy servant, Lord give me understanding;* after this let him pursue nothing in this chace, but that he may improve and grow better than himself.* Is he ignorant? let him observe if any light may be had on any hand. Is he tortured with hatred or envy? Is he disordered with lust, avarice, ambition, or any other distemper of the mind? Let him seek his remedy here, and he will find it. Is any one sad? Let him here look for

of the bible; if they condescended at any time to take plainer texts, it was their first business to make them as unintelligible as they could by far fetched allegories and ridiculous allusions; which custom is here obliquely censured by Erasmus: modern historians tell us this method is still in use among the monkish preachers, and even some of the jesuits themselves have been reproached for it, not long ago.

* 1 Pet. v. 5. James 1. 5. Psalm cxix. 18, 125.

consolation. and he will depart with chearfulness. Is any one in doubt and perplexity? He will be supplied here with the best advice. Is any one in danger through temptation? Let him fortify himself with the gospel. Doth any one thirst after righteousness? He will here find a most pure fountain, of which *whosoever drinketh it shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life;* nor shall he hereafter thirst for those waters which are drawn out of the cisterns that are trodden and disturbed by the hoofs of all the beasts of the earth. If any one hungers for food of life, here is *the bread that came down from heaven,* of which whosoever eateth, shall become strong and vigorous in Christ, *until he come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.** This is that fountain of paradise, whence do flow the four rivers watering the face of the whole earth: this is the bread of the divine word with which Jesus even to this day refreshes the promiscuous multitude flocking to him and abiding with him in desert places.

I know it is the province of pastors to distribute this bread broken and delivered out by Christ to the people. But what if the pastors are lazy? What if they are become wolves? It is their part to dig the wells and to hand to the people the liquor of the heavenly doctrine drawn from them, that they perish not through thirst in the wilderness. But what if the pastors turn Philistines, and stop up the streams of living water by throwing in earth?† What shall the people do? They must implore the aid of Jesus

* John iv. 14. John vi. 41. Eph. iv. 13. † Gen. xxvi. 15.

the prince of pastors.* He yet lives, nor hath forsaken the care of his flock. Being called upon by the public prayers of his people he will perform what he hath promised in Ezekiel: *Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out, as a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among the sheep that are scattered,* and what follows in the same prophet.†

The sheep are unlearned, but they are rational, and out of the same sheep the shepherds are chosen; and it happens sometimes that the sheep is wiser than the shepherd himself.

Moreover as it does not become the layman seditiously to rebel against his presbyters, lest that order be confounded which Paul would have in the body of Christ, so doth it not become the priests to tyrannize over the flock, otherwise the sedition is to be imputed to them.‡ Therefore as often as the pastors do their duty, they are to be heard as the messengers of God, by whom Christ speaks unto us. And if they teach corruptly, still if there is a mixture of good *that* is to be gathered. But if they wholly cease to teach, or teach those things which are plainly repugnant to the gospel; or if upon occasion a teacher is not to be had, let every one refresh his own mind by private

* Hence it appears both what Erasmus thought of the priests who withheld the scriptures, and also what he thought of the expedient of taking directions from the pretended vicar of Christ.

† Ezek. xxxiv. 11, 12.

‡ This concession from so great a man within the pale of the roman church, is a great point gained on the side of the reformers, as it reduces the controversy concerning schism to a question of fact, viz. *whether the priests, &c. did tyrannize?* which will bear no dispute.

reading: let every man draw what he is able from the fountains of his Saviour: let every one take from the sacred loaves, what may satisfy his hungry soul. The spirit of Jesus, who promised to be present where two were gathered together in his name,* will not be absent even from a single man in these kind of meditations. In vain do even six thousand assemble, if they come not together in the name of Jesus. And *they* only come together in the name of Jesus, who regard nothing but the glory of their prince and eternal salvation.

Some man will say to me the discerning of spirits is difficult, and the messenger of Satan sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light. I own it; and for that reason I am for no rash judgment. But still the testimony of his own conscience is to every man his most certain suffrage.† Next to this is the agreement of the scripture and the example of Christ; and after all some things are too clear to admit of any doubt, or to require an interpreter. And yet even with these things they are offended, who have devoted themselves wholly to the world, for no other reason but that they obstruct their designs and desires.

And for what other reason was Christ so grievous to the pharisees and scribes, than whose doctrine nothing is more just, than whose life nothing more innocent, than whose power no-

* Mat. xviii. 20.

† *Suffragium.* As this is a matter of great consequence, it is thought good to keep to Erasmus's own word; which is not only decisive against the dominion of Rome over the conscience, but is also unfavourable to those high church protestants, who contend that a man's sincerity is not sufficient to excuse his errors.

thing more beneficent? The case was, they were in possession of a sort of kingdom. They were honoured as men of learning, they were adored as saints, they were enriched from all quarters; and they desired that state of things should be perpetual; which yet was a most wicked state. And therefore they did not bear the light of evangelical truth, by which they perceived the whole scenery of their authority was to be dispelled.

How much is due to this kind of men, when their case is plainly desperate, Christ sufficiently informs us: let them alone, says he, they are blind leaders of the blind.

It is certain that Christ, who formerly imparted his prophetical spirit to shepherds, shuts up the treasure of his scriptures to no pious person if he is but a swineherd. Let every one therefore be conversant in these books, who is in quest of christian philosophy. If there is success, give thanks to God; if otherwise do not presently despond; seek, ask, knock. *He that seeketh shall find,* to him that *asketh shall be given, to him that knocketh he will open* who hath the key; with which he so openeth, *that no man may shut,* and *so shutteth that no man may open.** Consult your neighbour if there is any thing you do not understand: perhaps the holy Spirit, which is wont to make impressions upon the hearts of men in various ways, will speak to you by him. Let there be a pious curiosity, and an inquisitive piety: but away with all rashness, away with all headlong and obstinate conceit of science.

* Luke xi. 9, 10. Rev. iii. 7.

What you read and understand, embrace with the utmost faith; frivolous or impiously curious questions, if by chance they arise in your mind, check and expel; say, "what is above us is "nothing to us."

How the body of Christ might go out of the sealed sepulchre, do not dispute, it is enough for you that it went out. How the body of Christ may be on the holy table, where bread was placed, do not inquire, it is sufficient for you to believe, that the body of the Lord is there. Be not inquisitive how the Son should be different from the Father, seeing there is but one nature: it is enough for you to believe the Father, Son and holy Spirit to be three persons, but one God.†

But the first caution of all must be that you stretch not the scripture to your own lusts and sentiments, but rather accomodate your own opinions and course of life to the scripture rule. Otherwise from these attempts will arise perverse affections, contentions, schism, hatred and heresies, at once the bane of christian faith and charity.

But neither are novices immediately to be driven from the sacred books, although there should be some one who by reason of these op-

† It is remarkable here how Erasmus varies his expression when he speaks of a gospel fact, and when of a mere ecclesiastical doctrine: in the resurrection article it is enough for the christian that it was so: in the matter of transubstantiation it is sufficient to believe it. It is true he speaks of the Trinity in the same words: and like enough for the same reason: for as the substitution of the real body for the bread is no scripture doctrine, so neither are the words nature and person, added in scripture to the simple numerals, three and one. The school terms in which this doctrine was absurdly attempted to be explained, makes this conjecture still the more probable.

portunities [of reading] falls into mistakes: for this is not the fault of the reading but of the man: nor was the gospel forbidden to be read in churches, because the ancient heretics picked the seeds of their errors from it. Neither are bees kept from flowers, because the spider sometimes sucks poison from them. Let all read, but he who would read with profit let him read soberly, let him not read indolently, as he would a human history that concerns him not, but greedily, attentively, diligently. Let him accompany Jesus like a pious disciple through all his footsteps; let him observe what he does, and consider and search out what he says. Let him examine every thing, and he will find in this simple and artless scripture the ineffable meaning of the heavenly wisdom: he will see in that foolishness of God (with reverence be it spoken) appearing at the first with a humble and despicable face, that which is far beyond all human prudence, how sublime and admirable soever.

There is moreover nothing said there which doth not concern every one of us; there is nothing transacted there, which does not daily happen in our own life, more covertly indeed, but with no less reality. Christ is born in us, nor are there wanting Herods, who endeavour to destroy him yet tender and at the breast. He grows, and by degrees comes to maturity. He heals all manner of disease, if any one only implores his aid with confidence. He doth not drive away the leprous nor dæmoniacs, nor those who are defiled with issues of blood, nor the blind, nor the lame. There is no disease of any kind so horrible or incurable which he

takes not away, if we say to him from the heart, *Jesus thou son of David, have mercy on me;* or, *Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean.* He even raises the dead to life. He teaches, he terrifies, he threatens, he sooths, he comforts.*

He hath now his *jews*, who will not allow their *Moses* to be obscured by his light. He hath *scribes* and *pharisees* that lay in wait for him. And I wish he may not have more than one *Annas* and one *Caiaphas.*† He hath his *Iscariots* who sell his innocent blood for money. Neither is there wanting Pilate and his band, by whom he is scourged, spit upon, and crucified.

In the mean time he hath also his little flock depending upon him; he hath those who say, *Lord, whither shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.* In this kind of philosophy it is profitable for all to be conversant, even novices or illiterate. And to those who are thus employed with sobriety, an unction will not be wanting, to teach them all things that belong to eternal salvation, according to the prophecy of Joel. *I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, and they shall all be taught of God.* Paul would not have the *spirit quenched,* but wishes that all might prophesy. And Moses being desired to forbid *Eldad* and *Medad* to prophesy, answers, *would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them.*§

* Mark x. 47. Luke v. 12. † John vi. 68.

The ſtation and office of theſe two, and the author's ſentiments of eccleſiaſtical princes hereafter expreſſed, ſhew to what and to whom all this points.

§ Joel ii 28. 1 Theſ. v. 19, 20. Numb. xi. 29.

Some people think it a monstrous thing to have the scriptures translated into the French or English tongues: but the evangelists were not afraid to write that in *greek* which our Lord spake in *Syriac*, nor were the latins to turn the language used by the apostles into the roman tongue: nor had Jerom any scruples in translating the scriptures into *Dalmatic*. I wish indeed they were translated into all languages. Christ desires to have his philosophy propagated in the utmost extent. He died for all, and desires to be known of all.

It would conduce much to this, if either his books were translated into the several languages of all nations, or it could be brought about by the endeavours of sovereign princes, that the three tongues to which the divine philosophy is principally committed* might be learned by all people. If in the compass of a few years the industry of the Roman princes could make the Gauls, Germans, Spaniards, Africans, Ægyptians, Asiatics, Cilicians, and Jews, speak latin and greek in their common discourse, for no other end but that their dominion, which was to last for no long time, might by the intercourse of languages, be more easily extended; how much more reasonable is it that this should be endeavoured by us, that the em-

* The three tongues he means are the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; the two firſt are the originals of the old and new teſtaments. The laſt no body thought of preferring to that honour before father Hardouin; that Eraſmus meant to pay it no ſuch compliment is plain from what he ſays above, namely, that the evangeliſts wrote the goſpels in Greek, and that the Latins tranſlated the works of the Apoſtles into their own tongue: that is, out of Greek into Latin.

pire of Christ which is to remain for ever*, should be propagated through all the regions of the world? which, why it is at present to so small a compass I know not, unless, as I suspect, there are men who had rather, under pretence of Christ†, retain a worldly kingdom in a strait corner of the world, than that Christ himself should reign over the whole earth ‡. But of this perhaps I may discourse more seasonably in another place. To go on with my subject.

Why does it seem indecent for every one to sound forth the gospel in the tongue wherein he was born, and which he understands? The frenchman in french, the englishman in eng-

* *Sine fine* says the original, which I apprehend is a slip of the excellent author's memory. Our Saviour's kingdom is to last *throughout all ages, as long as the moon endureth*, but *then cometh the* END *when he shall have delivered up the* KINGDOM *to* GOD, *even the* FATHER.

† *Sub Christi prætextu* is imperfect, and should be supplied in some such manner as this, *under a pretence of a vicegerency under Christ*. The corner of the earth to which this worldly dominion was confined in our author's days, shews this vicegerency or vicarship to be the pretence he speaks of.

‡ The Problem, *why the kingdom of Christ is so much confined?* seems even now as puzzling as ever, after all the labours of missionaries of different countries. Shall we take Erasmus's solution and apply it to reformed as well as popish powers? I hope the progress of the English and Dutch settlements abroad will not admit of this: at the same time that the management of the jesuits and other monks may account for their little success, and their many miscarriages. It is hard, however, for us to judge accurately of things transacted at so great a distance. But be the solution what it will, the fact itself is well worth the consideration of civil and ecclesiastical governors of all communions; and particularly of all societies for the propagation of the gospel. But I doubt it is hardly time to talk of any extensive propagation abroad, whilst we propagate a religion, which glories in breaking down partition walls, upon such narrow and fencing plans at home.

lish, the german in german, the indian in indian? To me it seems much more indecent or rather ridiculous, that novices and silly women should mumble over their psalms and *paternoster* in latin like parrots, when themselves do not understand what they pronounce. I would sooner (thinking herein with St. Jerom) congratulate the glory of the cross, and esteem it a mark of its magnificence and triumph, if it was celebrated in all languages by men of all sorts: if the ploughman at his plough-shafts should sing something out of the sacred psalms. If the weaver sitting at his web should sooth his labour with some strains out of the gospel: let the mariner sitting at his oar chant something out of this book; and lastly let the matron's companion or kinswoman repeat something out of it to her whilst she is sitting at her distaff.

What more foreign to the prophetical mysteries than the eunuch of queen Candace, brought up in a palace, bound to the service of a woman, and lastly an Æthiopian, than which nation scarce any more effeminate: and yet delicate as he was, riding in his chariot, he read Isaias prophesying of Christ. Being a heathen and a novice he understood not the sense of the scripture, and yet because he read with a pious curiosity, the interpreter Phillip is presently sent to him; the eunuch is converted into a man, he is baptized in the water, and the black Æthiop is cloathed with the snow-white fleece of the immaculate lamb, and immediately of the slave of a prophane queen is made a servant of Jesus Christ.

Now that we have so many christians as ig-

norant of the christian wisdom, as those who are at the greatest distance from the profession, is in my opinion in a great measure to be imputed to the *priests*. And I think I see a way how we may hereafter render them a little less unfit for sacred reading; namely, if a clear, short, learned and plain summary of the christian faith and doctrine be yearly published to the christian people.

And that nothing may be depraved by the errors of the preachers, I would have a book composed by learned and upright men, which should be repeated to the people by the mouth of the priest. This book I would desire to have compiled, not from human stores, but from the gospels, the apostolic epistles, and the creed, which whether it was published by the apostles I know not, but certainly it carries with it the face of apostolic purity and majesty. And this I think might be done very seasonably in the Easter holidays; and would certainly be better, than provoking the people to laughter by impertinent and sometimes obscene jests, which custom I know not what *Cacodæmon* hath brought into the church*; for if the people are to be engaged, and sometimes to be roused with some sort of pleasantry, yet to raise their laughter by ludicrous things of this sort, is the part of buffoons and not of divines.

* But whatever devil introduced it, the cuſtom ſtill remains in the church not only among the merry mendicant-devils, but even the preachers of reputation. The celebrated Maimbourg in the laſt generation was famous (or rather conſidering how he was handled by the gentlemen of *Port Royal* infamous) for the *motte rire*; and we do not find by later accounts that this *cacodæmon* hath yet been exorciſed.

Moreover I think it would not a little contribute to this end, if children which have been baptised and are come to maturity, should be commanded to be present at these kind of preachings, wherein the contents of their baptismal vow should be clearly declared them. Then let them be diligently examined in private by men of integrity, whether they sufficiently understand, and remember what the priest hath told them. If they shall be found sufficiently to understand it, let them be asked if they hold what their sureties promised in their name in baptism to be binding upon themselves; if they acknowledge this, then let this vow be publicly and solemnly renewed (assembling together all of one age) and that with some weighty, significant, chaste, serious and magnificent ceremonies, and such as become that profession,* than which none can be more sacred. For what indeed are human professions, but a sort of images of this most holy one?

The monks very well know how to recommend their professions to the people by mimic ceremonies, and act this farce in such sort that sometimes tears are drawn from the spectators; how much more becoming would this be in that most solemn profession by which we inlist ourselves, not to man, but to Christ, and swear not to the rule of *Benedict*, or *Francis*,† but

* Erasmus does not mean here the christian profession taken at large, but the baptismal profession in contra-distinction to the vow or profession of monkery, as appears by what follows.

† If in our author's opinion, the ceremonies of the monkish profession were apish and farcical, the institution itself could be in no high esteem with him. But indeed the freedom he takes with monks in other parts of his writings plainly discover his heresie in this article.

to the gospel rule? Thus it would come to pass that the youth would understand what service they are obliged to perform for their captain; and by what kind of studies they should attain to true piety. Their elders also would thus be reminded, how many ways they have transgressed their own vows.

There are now acted in some churches comedies, which I do not wholly disapprove, concerning the resurrection and ascension of Christ into heaven, and the mission of the holy Ghost.*

* Why Eraſmus ſhould not wholly diſapprove theſe comedies one can hardly gueſs, unleſs there was a decenter ſort of them than thoſe of which *Ludovicus Vives* gives the following account. "At "what time, ſays he, the ſacred offices relative to the redemption "of the world by the death of Chriſt are celebrated, it is the cuſtom "to exhibit plays to the people hardly any thing different from this "ſcenery [of the Ægyptians]: and though I ſhould ſay no more, "whoever hears thus much will think it abominable enough to make "plays of a thing ſerious in the higheſt degree. There Judas is "laughed at, venting the moſt impertinent things imaginable whilſt "he is betraying Chriſt. There the diſciples flee, the ſoldiers pur-"ſuing the loud laughter both of the actors and ſpectators. There "Peter cuts off the ear of Malchus, the multitude in their mourn-"ing apparel applauding him as if the captivity of Chriſt were "thus revenged: and after a little while he who had juſt now "ſo bravely fought, terrified by the interrogatories of a ſingle "wench, diſowns his maſter, the mob laughing at the girl while ſhe "queſtions him, and hiſſing Peter for denying him. Amidſt ſo "many players, ſo much laughter and impertinence [the perſon re-"preſenting] Chriſt alone is compoſed and grave, and when he "endeavours to bring them to ſerious diſpoſitions, he renders them, "I know not how, not only here, but in the very ſacred offices, "cool and unaffected; [all this is tranſacted] with great wickedneſs "and impiety, not ſo much of the actors and ſpectators as the prieſts, "who have the ordering of this ſort of things." *In Auguſt. de civitate Dei*, lib. viii. cap. xxvii. Some remains of this infamous practice were in Germany, (and perhaps ſtill are) after the reformation. See *Nouv. de Repub. des Lettres, mois de Juin.* 1684. Art. v.

But how magnificent a show would it be to hear the voice of so many youths devoting themselves to Jesus Christ, of so many swearing fidelity to him, renouncing this world which lieth in wickedness, abjuring and hissing out Satan* with all his pomps, pleasures and works: to see new Christs† bearing the ensign of their general in their foreheads; to see a flock of candidates coming out of the holy laver; to hear the voice of the rest of the people, applauding and wishing prosperity to the young christians.

These things however, I would have so performed in public, that children may with no less diligence imbibe the doctrine of Christ both in public and private as much as may be from their very cradles:‡ and these public ceremonies will have the more authority, if they are dispensed by the bishops themselves, and not by parish priests and hireling suffragans. If these things were done as they ought to be, we should, if I mistake not, have somewhat sincerer christians than we now have.

* Our author had just before been speaking of church-comedies; in these the devil was always the fool of the play, and was accordingly beaten, kicked and buffeted about by the rest of the actors, and at last hissed off the stage, and to this Erasmus here alludes; after the reformation this devil clown was turned into a vice, and introduced into the profane comedy. Thus the player in *Shakespeare's Taming of a shrew*, amongst other properties, speaks of *vinegar to make their devil roar*. See Warburton's note on the place. vol. ii. p. 293.

† *New Christs, novos Christos.* The expression is grating; but he means only newly anointed with the chrism.

‡ Erasmus seems here only to approve of this pageantry in the profession of these candidates, to exclude and discredit it in other instances, where it can serve no good purpose.

But here a twofold objection may arise ; first that here may seem to be a repetition of baptism, which is not lawful : secondly, that there may be danger lest some, upon hearing the vow, should not confirm what was done by their proxies.

The first of these objections is easily obviated, if these things are so transacted, as to be nothing else but a sort of installment, and representation of the former baptism in the same manner as when we are daily sprinkled with holy water.*

The solution of the latter is more difficult; but every thing is to be tried, that no body may desert their first faith ; if this cannot be secured, perhaps it would not be expedient to compel such a one; but rather to leave him to his own mind till he should repent, and in the

* In these rites recommended by Erasmus at the renewal of the baptismal vow, there is nothing that looks like a colour for this objection, except the candidates coming out of the sacred laver; which as far as I can learn makes no part of confirmation in the roman church : I imagine he took his plan from the custom of the church in earlier times, when baptism and confirmation were administered at one and the same time (which the case of adults especially might seem to require) or, perhaps, what we call confirmation, was no distinct rite at all, but only a concomitant ceremony of baptism. But it is plain that in confirmation administered at a long distance of time from the baptism, as is here proposed, the case will differ, and consequently the objection of a repeated baptism, is not so easily answered. The matter is evidently this ; Erasmus considers his ceremony as equally clear of the objection of a reiterated baptism as the holy water sprinkling : and thus obliquely puts a mark of reprobation upon that absurd and superstitious practice, which however the modest author of the *Catholic Christian instructed* puts upon the same footing with baptism itself; for he roundly tells Dr. Middleton " he " might with as good a grace have proved the sacrament of baptism " to be heathenish as their use of holy water." See Dr. *M.'s prefatory discourse to his letter from Rome*, page xiv.

mean time to subject him to no other punishment, but an exclusion from the eucharist and other sacraments, but by no means let him be shut out from the service of the church or sermons.

I would also have small books concerning the christian doctrines dispersed about, in which the holy Christ should be described, not obscured with jewish ceremonies, or the fictions and decrees of men; nor, lastly, morose and rough, but as he is, gentle and amiable. Whoever should be instructed with these rudiments, would not come altogether ignorant to the reading of the sacred volumes.*

There are now many people who at fifty years of age know not what they vowed at baptism, and who never dream what the articles of faith, the Lord's prayer, or the sacraments of the church may mean; we often find this both in common discourse, and in private confessions. But it is still more to be lamented that most of us priests are of that sort, that we never seriously consider what it is to be truly a christian. We are christians in title, in our customs and ceremonies, rather than in heart.

* Erasmus is here of so truly a reforming and tolerating spirit, and expresses so freely his moderation, as well as his contempt of the figments and commandments of men, that no one can doubt but he was in earnest, and wished and endeavoured with all his heart and strength to mend matters: this I doubt cannot be said for *Bessarion*, *Bembus* and *Borromeus*, who, together with father Paul, we are told by a very capable judge (*Letters concerning Mythology*, page 63) saw into and despised the superstition of their own church. The three first of these were cardinals and had great power and interest, which it should seem, they never thought of employing to the good purposes of reformation. Erasmus and father Paul were of another stamp, they were men of integrity, and did what they could, each in his province.

Either for want of learning we are not furnished with materials to instruct the people, or else corrupted with worldly lusts we do our own business rather than Jesus Christ's. What wonder then that the people should live in darkness, when they are dark who should be the light of the world; when they have no relish of any thing worthy of Christ, who should be the *salt of the earth;* when they are purblind who ought to be the *candle yielding light to the whole house;* when they are abandoned to sordid gains and pleasures, who should be *the city set on an hill,* to shew the way to those that go astray?

And I wish there were not so many to whom that passage of Isaiah may be applied: "*His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber, yea they are greedy dogs which can never have enough: and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter.*" Also that of Jeremiah: *my people have been lost sheep, their shepherds have caused them to go astray.* Again Ezekiel with great freedom rages against *shepherds turned into wolves, who feeding themselves scatter and tear the unhappy flock.** And in other places also there are frequent complaints in the prophets of shepherds, that from these chiefly proceed the calamity of the people: witness the prophet Zechariah: *they were troubled because there was no shepherd.*†

* Matt. v. 13, 14, 15.

† Isaiah, lvi. 10, 11. Jerem. l. 6. Ezekiel xxxiv. 2, 10. Zechariah x. 2. If any of this account given by Erasmus of the

Sometimes the sins of the people deserve this, that instead of a shepherd, Almighty God should suffer the hypocrite or an idol to reign, when according to Paul *they will not endure sound doctrine, and heap to themselves teachers,* who mey teach things rather grateful than true, *to their itching ears.* And then the dish and the cover are both of a sort, and according to the prophet Hosea, *like people like priest.** For the lay-flock hath intermixed in it, wolves, foxes, leopards and other hurtful beasts.

But however for the most part the people consist of sheep. They are ignorant, simple and unlearned, yet profitable to their master if they are managed by the care of a faithful shepherd. The condition of these, he, the best of shepherds, lamented, who would have none of his flock to perish; who brought back the lost sheep upon his shoulders, which he had sought with great pains in the mountains. He, where he saw a great multitude of men, and at the same time considered how little the priests of that time, the scribes and pharisees, acted the part of shepherds, was *moved with compassion, because they were as sheep scattered abroad and forsaken, and having no shepherd.*†

Happy is that people whom Jesus vouchsafes to look upon; his bare look is not insignificant. He hath not eyes baneful and bewitching, but

priests and people of his time, be applicable to our own, and in places where more liberty and a better spirit is at least professed, it is high time to mend it; the manner how, is immediately within the province of those who have the government of the shepherds.

* 2 Tim. iv. 3. Hosea iv. 9 † Luke xv. 5. Mark vi. 34.

by their divine virtue full of health and safety. He looked upon Peter denying him and Peter repented. And when he looked upon him the first time, he foretold the firmness of his faith in the new name he gave him. He looked upon his disciples in the mount, and his heavenly doctrine was rivetted in their minds.

What remains then, brethren, but that we be as sheep laying aside all malice, pride and wrath. None of these agree to the character of sheep: and let us pray the most affectionate Jesus that he would vouchsafe to cast his eyes on us. He is the good shepherd, and will have compassion on us, and will either send proper labourers into his harvest, if we request that of the Lord of the harvest, as we read in St. Matthew, or he will teach us himself, as St. Mark writes; and he began, says he, to teach them many things.* Nor did he only teach, but satisfied that whole multitude with bread in the

* Matt. ix. 38, Mark vi. 38. viii. 8. By this alternative it appears, that Erasmus had no great faith that *proper labourers* would be suddenly sent into the *harvest*; as the church was then constituted and governed, the prospect was, upon the matter, desperate, and the anti-reformation of Trent does great honour to his judgment concerning the dispositions of the clergy. Ecclesiastical establishments, indeed, whether good or bad, do naturally by length of time produce the state of things here described, and if not occasionally and seasonably reviewed, as the circumstances of men and things alter, never fail to stagnate into mere forms, and after that generate filth, corruption, dregs and sediments, which render the waters of instruction flat, insipid and good for nothing; but to yield a kind of profitable manure to the lords of the lake, who (themselves situated far enough from the stench of the nuisance) injoy the ignorance and stupefaction of the people. These in their turn intoxicated with their worldly cares and pleasures, never dream of praying for other sort of teachers to break their slumbers. Thus it hath been, thus it is, and thus it must be, till the lord of the harvest shall visit for these things, and inlarge his little flock, who tremble at his word, and

wilderness, which the tyranny of the pharisees suffered to perish with hunger. Jesus doth not even now cease to teach his own, he doth not now cease to feed those who leaving the cities follow him into the desert; he poured out his holy Spirit formerly upon his disciples, nor is the hand of the Lord shortened now, nor doth the virtue of his spirit fail in the minds of pious men, which that we may be worthy to receive let us do what his disciples formerly did. Let us ascend into the upper chamber, withdrawing our minds from the cares of transitory things. Let us be of one mind, unanimously persevering in supplications, if we would have our prayers heard. Let all be of one voice, of the same opinion, and use the same endeavours. Let us pray in the name of Jesus, and our heavenly father will hear us.

But now how are christian people disturbed with divisions and endless contentions? Nor is there peace on any side. Temporal princes contend in destructive wars, ecclesiastical prelates are likewise involved in wars; the people are set against each other in inveterate quarrels. The true faith is corrupted several ways, and christian peace confounded.

I do not now condemn one side more than the other. Wheresoever there is dissention, there the devil is. Whoever saw longer or more terrible confusions of war among the heathens, than we have seen for some years by-past among christians? And, not to discuss the occasions of it, when was the ship of the church so tossed with waves? Why do we not search into the

who, in the mean time, muſt content themſelves, as they have reaſon, to take their own inſtructions from himſelf.

causes of these evils, that having discovered the spring we may more conveniently apply a remedy to this distemper.*

I find in the evangelist that the apostolical ship was twice in danger, once in the night when Jesus was absent, as we read Matthew xiv. *The ship was now,* says he, *in the midst of the sea tossed with waves.* And what wonder that tumults arise in the church, if Jesus be not present; as often as the spirit of Christ is absent, then the spirits of this world miserably toss and disturb the ship. What wonder there should be no wholesome counsel, where the darkness is such that they did not know Jesus coming towards them, and were afraid of their Saviour's approach, supposing him to be an evil spirit. And except Jesus speaking to them in a voice they well knew, had commanded them to be of good chear, they would have died with fear.

There Peter thought it safer to be in the waves with Jesus than in the ship so endangered. Let us imitate the faith of Peter, and Jesus immediately returning into the ship will quiet all tempests.†

* This discourse of Erasmus bears date in the year 1522, the same year in which Henry the eighth published his book against Luther, and consequently when the dissentions occasioned by the first movements of Luther's reformation were at the height. To search into the causes of all this without removing them, as the people were then disposed, would have been to no purpose; to remove the causes, was death to the riches and secular emoluments of the clergy; so the distemper was left to gather strength, till certain quack-doctors at Trent undertook it, and by cutting off the sound members of the catholick church, and plaistering up the rotten ones as well as they could, made a shift to preserve the headship of this corrupted body still in the Pope.

† Mark iv. 38. Matt. viii. 24. Erasmus by this metaphor of

The ship was once more in danger, as we finding the same evangelist Chap. viii. Jesus indeed being present but fast asleep. *And* (adds St. Mark) *on a pillow*, nor is it without reason that he farther tells us that it was in the *hinder part of the ship*. Would you hear what danger it is for Jesus to sleep? *And there arose* says he, *a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship so that it was now full*, or as Matthew tells, it *was covered with waves*. Ambition is a horrible wind; avarice is a pestilent wind; the love of pleasure is a pernicious wind; and so of the rest of the worldly lusts. These winds will raise these troubles so that the billows of war and dissention will break into the church. And it happened also, that not only the ship in which were the apostles, was in danger, but the rest also which accompanied the ship of Jesus. For Mark adds, *and there were also with him other little ships.*

Now what does this sleep of Jesus mean? I wish he did not sleep so often in the hearts of pastors, whose place is in the *stern*, the most honourable in the whole ship, and where it is proper the pilot should be to manage the helm. What means the pillow under his head? Was it not he that said *the son of man hath not where to lay his head?* What does this mean, *had not where to lay his head?* Certainly Jesus had

the ship seems to insinuate that it may be on some occasions safer to be out of the church than in it, and for this reason, namely that Jesus is not always in the church, [so called]. He fathers, we see, the sentiment upon Peter. But whatever Peter thought, his successors are not of this mind, their constant cry is stick to the church at all hazards. But according to Erasmus, the reformers took the safer course, and finding the ship of the church going to wreck for want of its proper pilot, forsook it and fled to Jesus, under all disadvantages.

some inn to resort to, and it is probable that he there was not without a bolster to sleep on. But he that hath nothing in this world to rest his mind upon, but is constantly watching in the study of heavenly things, *he* hath not where to lay his head. O how soft a pillow is great honour, obtained right or wrong, to the ambitious man? how sweet a pillow is a domestic fortune finely augmented and well secured to the lover of riches.

They who undertake the office of magistrates so as not to exercise it for themselves but others; they, who consider the episcopate as a labour, and not as a dominion,* have no pillow to invite them to sleep, but rather a rattle which will not suffer sleep to steal upon them.

We now see some so ensnared, I had almost said drunk with their worldly success, that they seem to sleep not on a pillow, but, as they say, on mandrakes. Hence indeed comes this dangerous and tempestuous state of things, because Christ sleepeth in us: but in this so critical a juncture which concerns us all, what measures shall we take, my brethren? In great storms pilots are wont to ask every ones opinion.†

* *Regnum.* Perhaps it might be tranſlated government, that is, a ſtate of things where the governour hath nothing to do but to command, or the governed but to obey. But as *Regnum* is here uſed in a bad ſenſe, and church-government commonly in a good one, this might look too invidious. To come at a clear idea of the author's meaning, the beſt way will be to bring the eccleſiaſtical governments we would examine to as cloſe a compariſon as we can with the kingdom or epiſcopate of Chriſt.

† I would with all deference humbly recommend this expedient to our preſent pilots the great-church-men of our reformed eſtabliſhment. They are much at a diſtance from the cares and toils of pi-

Whence shall we rather take advice than from the gospel? Distrusting our own guards,* let us call upon Jesus, let us knock till he hears, let us move him till he awake. So he may, and so he desires to be roused. Let us say to him with a mournful voice, *Lord, carest thou not that we perish?* Let us say with the greatest confidence, *Lord, save us we perish.* As he is exorable, he will hear us, and with his breath will at once calm the tempest, raised by the wind of this world. He will say to the wind, *be quiet;* he will say to the sea, *Peace, be still.* And what was the consequence? *The wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*†

ous labourers in the harveſt, who however can very well explain to them the difficulties they meet with in ſetting forward the kingdom of Chriſt on account of the ſtorms here alluded to by Eraſmus. If there are any particulars in the forms, adminiſtration or management of church affairs, which occaſion or increaſe theſe difficulties, ſomebody ſurely muſt be anſwerable for them. To imagine it may do harm to inquire into this is ſhamefully to diſtruſt the good providence of God, in a caſe which all divines agree to aſſure us is more particularly under his eſpecial care. It is certain a great deal is objected to us by men of other communions, whoſe ſincerity in promoting the common ſalvation it would be great uncharitableneſs to ſuſpect. But it is of more conſequence ſtill to relieve many pious, wiſe and worthy men among our own clergy, who find themſelves under bonds and burdens, which they are no otherwiſe able to bear, than as the very means of their neceſſary ſubſiſtence compel them to acquieſce. It is ſaid that application hath been made to the heads of the church by ſome of her own legitimate ſons to hear and eaſe the groans of the oppreſſed. May the reproach of deafneſs and blindneſs to theſe reaſonable remonſtrances never fall upon the illuſtrious fathers of our church, many of whom have diſtinguiſhed themſelves ſo ſignally in defence of our common faith and even of our chriſtian liberty. Be this blindneſs and deafneſs for ever the reproach of Rome and the genuine mark of the beaſt.

* Namely, the proviſions of church-power, cenſures, penalties, &c.

† Mark iv. 39.

As long as the ship of the church is tossed by the caprice of the winds, it is in the utmost danger. And if a temporary tranquillity happens, a wind arising from another quarter excites a new tempest. If the east-wind of avarice is quiet for a time, the west-wind of pride gets up: if the southern breezes of pleasures cease, the northern hurricane of anger arises. Have I obtained that for which I was contending? Presently something else is thrown in my way, for the sake of which I must undertake a new and fierce contest; for of worldly lusts there is no end. These winds cannot be appeased unless Jesus threaten them.

Let us all therefore in common consult the tranquillity of the christian profession; let us put off every one his private lusts: let us with one accord look after those things which become the spirit and profession of christianity. Let the people compose themselves to the study of true piety, and with ardent and unanimous prayers solicit Jesus Christ, that he would turn the hearts of princes to peaceable counsels.

But especially let ecclesiastical princes take their measures in such sort, as with an upright conscience to attempt nothing, but that through faith, charity, piety, concord, the contempt of wordly, and the love of heavenly things, Christ may reign, flourish and command as far and wide as possible. So will they be truly great princes, if their authority is made subservient to the glory of the eternal prince, and the benefit of the christian flock; so will the people be happy if they give obedience to such princes as unto Christ himself.

Otherwise if we go on to wear out our own strength by intestine broils, there is danger that God, provoked by our sins, will send us some *Nebuchadonosor*, who, by severer remedies, may teach us to be wiser. God protects those who are united in concord; the enemy will despise those who are separated by dissentions.

But never will this concord happen, if every one is obstinate in maintaining his own right, nor will peace be ever solid and lasting, unless it is cemented with true and solid reasons. Nothing that is brought about by terrors and threatenings can be durable. Nothing is firm which is woven by human artifice and oblique measures; unless Christ be present at our counsels, though the evil may be suppressed for a time, it will presently break out with greater destruction to the world.*

* That this little treatise may receive all the weight which so inconsiderable a hand can give it, I shall here observe, that Erasmus ascribes the want of unity to three causes more especially: 1. An obstinate adherence to matters of right. 2. The use of terrors and threatenings. 3. Human artifice and sinister measures. These indeed do not visibly and avowedly co-operate together in any church but the Roman. Terrors, and threatenings, and human artifice in protestant churches are said at least to have no place; and certain it is that, upon the original plan of these churches, such expedients are most expressly condemned: and consequently force and fraud in protestant countries, can only be considered as the implements of arbitrary and carnal men, usurping the name of the church, for their own private ends. But if the truth may be told, an obstinate adherence to certain precarious opinions, insignificant customs, and temporal emoluments, called the rights of the church, is a thing of which even protestants are not at all ashamed. Thus to attempt to bring the revenues of the church to a more equal and proportionate distribution, hath been called an infringement of the rights of the church. The established church hath also her rights of decreeing rites and ceremonies, and requiring subscriptions and explicit assent to human ex-

Adieu, reader: I added this because the printer complained, that otherwise there would be some blank pages, which however I was not willing to fill with empty trifles.

Basil, Jan. 14th, 1522.

planations and articles of chriſtian faith and doctrine, &c. The diſſenting churches too, who exclaim againſt, and reprobate all this, have, as we learn from ſome modern caſes, their rights of excluding pious and righteous men from their communion, for nothing but difference of opinion in ſome very intricate points. That chriſtian ſocieties as ſuch have their rights, and cannot ſubſiſt without them, is not to be denied; but theſe, like the apoſtolical powers, ſhould ever be exerciſed for edification, and not for deſtruction; and the more that each chriſtian community endeavours ſo to exerciſe their rights, the nearer they will come to each other, and by ſtill farther endeavours may at length become one fold under one ſhepherd. The ſcripture rules of decency and order, large allowances, and candid forbearance, where there are no plain and ſpecific directions in the new teſtament; a judicious attention to the nature and limits of chriſtian liberty, and along with this, a due ſubmiſſion in matters of outward form, expedience and order to the reaſonable ordinances of the chriſtian magiſtrate, ſeem to an indifferent eye greatly to tend towards theſe beneficial and deſirable purpoſes of a general union; which, though none but viſionaries and enthuſiaſts will hope to bring about all at once, yet ſurely every wiſe man would deſire to ſee begun, by correcting and meliorating things the moſt notoriouſly liable to objection, and what all capable judges agree may either be altered for the better, or on account of their indifferenee wholly retrenched.

THE END.

A

SERIOUS ENQUIRY

INTO THE

USE AND IMPORTANCE

OF

EXTERNAL RELIGION,

OCCASIONED BY

Some paſſages in the Right Reverend the

Lord BISHOP OF DURHAM's

Charge to the Clergy of that Diocese,

At his Lordſhip's Primary Viſitation, in the year MDCCLI.

Humbly addressed to his Lordship.

I cannot but hold truth more ancient than error; every thing to be firmeſt upon its own bottom; and all novelties in the church to be beſt confuted by ſhewing how far they cauſe it to deviate from the firſt original. TWYSDEN's *Hiſt. Vindication of the church of* ENGLAND. P. 4.

[FIRST PRINTED MDCCLII.]

Part of a Letter written to the Author, relative to the subject of these Papers.

I HAVE, as you recommended to me, conſidered Mr. Warburton's* Comment on 1 *Tim.* iv. 8. and agree with him that the *bodily exerciſe* there ſpoken of has reference to the ritual obſervances of the jews; but whether to thoſe alone, as that learned gentleman's argument ſeems to me to require, I am not ſo clear.

There are two conſtructions of the words προς ολιγον, either of which will indeed imply that no other but jewiſh exerciſes are there intended.

1. The word χρονον may be underſtood, and then the ſenſe will be, as in the margin of our tranſlation, *for a little time*, that is to ſay, for ſo long and no longer than the moſaic inſtitute continued in force. Or,

2. προς ολιγον may mean *in ſome degree*, that is, ſo far as *bodily exerciſe* has the promiſe of *this life*. Theſe ſenſes, out of all doubt, make this *bodily exerciſe* peculiar to the jewiſh diſpenſation.

* Div. Legation, Book v. Sect. 6 page 470, of the 2d. edition.

But then, if the profitableneſs of ritual obſervances was to determine with that part of the law which enjoined them, or if it was to ceaſe when the promiſe of this life was ſuperſeded by the better promiſes of the goſpel (as is certainly the case, if the apostle is to be underſtood as above) I cannot ſee the reaſon why "there muſt "needs be ſome [ritual obſervances] under "the goſpel wherever there is a christian "church," as Mr. W. holds; unleſs ſuch obſervances are either derived,

1. From some plain and poſitive inſtitution of divine appointment; ſince, if ſuch things are no longer profitable by any virtue naturally belonging to them, and have none ſuperadded by divine authority, the christian church can have no reaſon for enjoining them: in that caſe the christian church, *teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men* would fall into condemnation. Or,

2. If the profitableneſs of rites, be they more or fewer, in the chriſtian church, be derived from ſome general expedience in the things themſelves (as I am inclined to underſtand the Apoſtle's words) there may then be left ſome room for human injunctions of the ritual kind, limited by the uſe of edifying; but then we muſt take the *bodily exerciſe* here mentioned in a larger ſenſe, and not underſtand it of the jewiſh

ordinances excluſive of others; and whether that will ſuit the interpretation Mr. W. gives of the latter part of the verſe, I am not quite ſatisfied.

I expect you will ſay that Mr. W. by ritual obſervances in the chriſtian church must be underſtood of ſuch as are appointed in the goſpel; the divine wiſdom being the beſt judge of what is either neceſſary or expedient for the church in any period; and, I ſuppoſe, when we meet, you will aſk me for ſome account of this general expedience I talk of.—For Mr. W. I pretend not to anſwer; and for myſelf ſhall only offer, that poſſibly there may be ſome inſtrumentality in human rites towards edification, and that ſuch inſtrumentality may be verified by their effects and operations upon particular perſons, though you and I may have no experience of the like.

However, I own my notions of this expedience are but very obſcure and confuſed; nor am I much enlightened by the epiſcopal charge you mentioned to me ſome time ago, and which was put into my hands this morning, with a very high character, by my neighbour Mr. ****. Perhaps his Lordſhip's doctrine might have the leſs weight with me, for having ſo much in the adverſaries ſcale:

February 7th, 1752.

A SERIOUS ENQUIRY, &c.

MY LORD,

WHEN I first perused your lordship's charge, I could not but think some passages in it, particularly in the 13th and the three following pages, liable to many just objections.

My conjecture was, that the papists, ever watchful to countenance their superstition, by pointing out the remnants of it yet unpurged out of our church, and to make their advantage of the concessions of some of our unwary divines, would certainly lay their finger upon what your lordship has advanced concerning the importance of *external religion.*

Still this was but my conjecture, which alone would never have afforded me sufficient reasons for troubling your lordship or the public on any occasion: but having now the misfortune to find it verified by a strenuous recommendation of this very charge from a zealous and bigotted papist to a worthy protestant gentleman, (both in my own neighbourhood) your lordship and the reasonable part of the public will, I trust, excuse me for dropping all other

respects but what are due to my religion and allegiance, till I have freely declared my sentiments of the dangerous tendency of your lordship's doctrine contained in the passages above referred to.

Your lordship, having told your clergy, p. 13. —"That their chief business is to endeavour "to beget a practical sense of religion upon the "hearts of the people, as what they acknow-"ledge their belief of, and profess they ought "to conform themselves to," proceeds to say, "and this is to be done by keeping up, as we "are able, the form and face of religion with "decency and reverence, and in such a de-"gree as to bring the thoughts of religion "often to their minds; and then endeavouring "to make this form more and more subser-"vient to promote the reality and power of it."

Though your lordship's expression in this passage is not very clear, yet the subsequent parts of the discourse lead us to understand your lordship here of the clergy's endeavours in their public ministrations; and thereupon to remark that the clergy of the church of England have no way of keeping up the form and face of religion any oftener, or in any other degree, than is directed by the prescribed order of the church; nor can they, I apprehend, contrive to make this form more or less subservient to promote the reality and power of religion, beyond the common operation of the form itself; and what that may be we shall have occasion to consider by and by.

There are, indeed, some methods of keeping up the form and face of religion in use with some clergymen of our church (though, I think,

but few) which are not prescribed in our established ritual; such as bowing to the east, turning the face to that quarter in repeating the creeds, dipping the finger in water, and therewith crossing the child's forehead in baptism; and some others of the like sort: but that your lordship means to encourage any thing of this kind by the degree, in which you would have this *form* and *face* of religion made *more and more subservient*, &c. I cannot be persuaded.

A late eminent and pious prelate, well skilled in the ritual of the church of England, hath told us, that "although our church claims "a power (in common with other national "churches) *to ordain, change, and abolish "ceremonies or rites, ordained only by man's au-"thority, so that all things be done to edifying*, "[Art. 34.] yet of this edifying she does not "allow or make any bishop, parson, or curate "to be the judge, but has tied them down to "certain rules—the rubrics of the common-"prayer, which are also now confirmed by "the laws of the land. Whosoever does less "[than is prescribed in these rubrics] is an "offender; whoever does more, is an inno-"vator, and does it without authority, and "is fitter to be punished than followed*," &c.

But, as I have little inclination, and less authority, to put a construction upon your lordship's words inconsistent with so plain a state of the case, for no better reason than because I cannot understand them myself in any other, I am obliged to leave them under their present

* Bp. Fleetwood's Works. Fol. 1737. page 722.

ambiguity, and pass on to something more intelligible.

"The form of religion," continues your lordship, "may indeed be where there is "little of the thing itself; but the thing itself "cannot be preserved amongst mankind with-"out the form."

Which may be very true if your lordship means the pagan, the mahometan, the roman catholic things called religion: take away the form from the religion of any of these, and you effectually destroy the thing itself: but, surely, your lordship, on second thoughts, will not extend this maxim to the christian religion.

The christian religion was revealed and dispensed, as we are taught, to make mankind happy both here and hereafter; we are farther taught that the circumstances of this religion without the spirit or power of it, will have no efficacy to procure this happiness: now one or more particular christians may be so situated that they cannot have the benefit of the form [the public form, of which your lordship is now speaking.] Apply your lordship's doctrine to the case of such people, and the consequence will be, that they can have no religion amongst them.

How different are the sentiments of the great and good archbishop Tillotson. His opinion was, that a man may be a very religious and good christian, "who quietly, and with-"out any noise and bustle, minds the substan-"tial parts of religion, and is truly devoted "towards God, just and peaceable, and chari-"table towards men; meek and humble and "patient, kind and friendly even to those that

" differ from him."—Yet such a one, he tells us, " shall hardly escape being censured for a " lukewarm, formal, moral man, destitue of " the grace of God and of the power of godli- " ness.*"—But why censured? why for no reason imaginable unless it is—" because the " power of godliness" cannot be preserved " amongst mankind without the forms and cir- " cumstances of it."

But, I am afraid, your lordship will have a greater authority still to encounter, even our blessed Saviour himself, between whom and a certain woman of Samaria there was once some discourse concerning this very point, viz. the respective value of the form and power of religion: our lord's words are remarkable. JESUS *saith unto her, woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this* mountain, *nor yet at* Jerusalem, *worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what* [i. e. according to your own inventions], *we know what we worship; for salvation is of the* Jews. *But the* hour cometh, *and* now is, *when the* true *worshippers shall worship the father* [not at *Jerusalem*, or in this or that mountain, but] *in* SPIRIT *and in* TRUTH; *for the Father* seeketh such *to worship him.* GOD *is a* SPIRIT, *and they that worship* HIM, must worship in SPIRIT and in TRUTH. John iv. 21. &c.

Can your lordship find your proposition, viz. " That the thing itself [religion] cannot

* Sermons, 8vo. Edit. 1743. page 4645. Vol. X. I set down this just as I find it printed, but cannot imagine how the word [formal] got into the sentence. I dare say the Archbishop did not put it there, as formality belongs to the character opposite to that he is here describing; and indeed is itself opposite to the other terms of reproach there mentioned.

"be preserved among mankind without the "form," in these words, or in any other words of the new testament? Do they not rather most evidently and expressly declare, that true religion shall be preserved, and true worshippers sought and accepted by God without any regard to forms at all?

Your lordship probably may suggest (what has often been said and repeated upon occasion of handling this subject) that "it is the utmost "extravagance and enthusiasm to suppose that "our Saviour intended to exclude all forms "from religion, seeing that he himself insti- "tuted two forms at least."——To which I answer:

1. That the forms instituted by our Saviour, are one thing, and the face and form of religion, spoken of by your lordship, quite another. If your lordship only means, "that "the evangelical thing called religion, cannot "be preserved amongst mankind without the "evangelical forms," surely it was very needless to refer to the heathens, the turks, and the papists in this behalf. I answer:

2. I receive and comply with the forms instituted by Christ, with the utmost reverence; and for the rest, I am of opinion with the excellent prelate already cited, viz. "We must "not be rude, nor do any thing that is natu- "rally indecent in the worship of God; this "authority should restrain; but farther than "this, I doubt not but the gospel hath left "us free."* But what is it to be left free in this respect, but just to pay less or more regard

* Ibid. Vol. VIII. page 3718.

to human forms, as we are inclined, without laying any stress upon them, or giving them any importance, in the affair of religion? But to answer more punctually:

3. I very much question whether your lordship's position will be found true, even though the forms instituted by our Lord himself should be taken into the account. We have among us, as your lordship knows, a sect of nominal christians called quakers, who make use of neither of the two forms above mentioned. Will your lordship say that these men "have "no religion preserved amongst them?" It is more than I dare affirm, because they tell me very seriously, that "they have a spiritual "baptism, and a spiritual communion, by "which they are firmly persuaded they fulfil "the command of Christ as effectually as we "do, who practice the formal rites according "to the verbal institution." In which, though I think they are mistaken, and that I could disprove them; yet dare I not condemn them, as I certainly should do by saying that they have no religion preserved among them. To their own master they must stand or fall for me. In the mean time I observe among the members of this society, much seriousness of deportment, benevolence of heart, and a sobriety and circumspection in their manners and conversation, not only extremely edifying in itself, but extremely full of tacit reproach to certain christians with more religious forms: All this they ascribe to the influence and operation of the good spirit of God, agreeably to the scripture accounts: and if among this people (who have too their religious worship in

public assemblies) there is no religion preserved, we must, I verily think, abide no longer by the gospel rule, but judge both men and things hereafter not by their fruits, but by their forms.

Your lordship, having stated this necessary and essential connexion between the form of religion and the thing itself, goes on to say: "And this form frequently occurring, in some "instance or other of it, will be a frequent "admonition to bad men to repent; and to "good men, to grow better; and also be a "means of their doing so." Page 14.

Hardly, my Lord, if the good archbishop understood the case, who says the gospel left us free [as above] "to the end that the less "we are tied to external observances, the more "intent we should be upon the spiritual and "substantial parts of religion, the conforming "ourselves to the mind and will of God, en-"deavouring to be like unto God, and to have "our souls and spirits engaged in those duties "we perform to him:"*—Which certainly was no good policy in the gospel, if the form and face of religion has a tendency to beget a practical sense of it upon mens hearts: and a greater tendency in proportion to the frequent occurrence of this face or form in some instance or other of it; i. e. if in every such occurrence it is an admonition to bad men to repent, &c. Bad men are so greatly indisposed to put themselves in the way of such admonitions, or to apply them, whenever and however they occur, that it seems quite necessary they should be tied

* Ibid.

to them, wherever their operations are so promising.

And therefore, if, as archbishop Tillotson hath stated the case, men are left free as to the face and form of religion, the presumption seems to be, that the face and form of religion is either wholly void of, or at least much less connected with the spirit and power of it, than your lordship's doctrine would make it.

Nor indeed will it be found, upon examination, that the archbishop hath at all misrepresented the gospel in this matter.

From our Lord we learn how apt the *religious forms, doctrines*, and *traditions* of men are to make the *commandments of God of no effect.* Matth, xv. 1—21. Mark vii. 1. &c. From St. Paul, that observances of this kind had, instead of *forwarding*, greatly *obstructed* his ministry among the *Galatians*, chap. iv. 9, 10, 11. and in his epistle to the *Colossians*, chap. ii. 20, 21, 22. The same apostle speaks of *ordinances after the commandments and doctrines of men*, as means and expedients of men living in the world: that is, living a mere carnal and secular life.*

* I am not forgetful that our divines, in their controversy with the dissenters about ceremonies, have alledged, that the forms and ceremonies abolished or condemned by Christ and his apostles, were either, 1. Such as were rudimental or elementary, and peculiar to the mosaic system: or 2. Such as were in themselves idolatrous or at least superstitious; but if it is considered what a variety of forms are specified in the several passages commonly referred to; as, *vain repetitions, long prayers, long garments, washing of cups, consecrated gifts, observation of days, abstinence from meats*, &c. it may not perhaps be so easy to avail ourselves of this distinction as is commonly imagined: for my own part, I have always considered the reproof in the gospel as extending to mere human doctrines and commandments respecting religion in general: if I am wrong (which is very possible) I will be thankful to him who will set me right.

To this agrees the experience of reasonable men in all ages and countries, both before and since the promulgation of christianity, who have observed that the number, variety, and frequent occurrence of forms in religion have been considered by the generality as commutations or compositions for their vices and iniquities; as something substituted in lieu of repentance, and dispensing from time to time, with the thing itself: and accordingly, ever since the gospel hath confirmed this observation by its superior evidence, wise, and good, and reasonable men have complained of the number and frequency of forms in religion, as loads and incumbrances upon true christian edification; and not seldom intimated that they were too often snares and traps to the secular and secure sinner, as well as sometimes to better men; teaching them to depend upon a virtue, and expect an influence from forms, which (as they have it not) they cannot impart. How things may be altered so, as to make this a seasonable doctrine only at certain times, as your lordship hath thought fit to suggest, p. 16. we shall have occasion to consider when that passage comes to be examined in its course.

Your lordship's next observation is, that "That, which men have accounted religion "in the several countries of the world, gene-"rally speaking, has had a great and conspi-"cuous part in all public appearances, and the "face of it been kept up with great reverence "throughout all ranks from the highest to the "lowest; not only upon occasional solemni-"ties, but also in the daily course of beha-"viour."

In giving instances of this, it is remarkable that your lordship has only mentioned the ancient pagan, the mahometan, and the roman catholic religions, wholly omitting the jewish, which undoubtedly had as great and as conspicuous a part, as well in all public appearances as in all ordinary transactions, as any of them. Now, had your lordship specified, or in the gentlest terms referred to the great and conspicuous parts of the mosaic institute, it must have immediately occurred to the hearer or the reader, that these great and conspicuous parts were actually and expressly abolished by Christ, and his disciples enjoined from thenceforward to lay the great stress of religion upon worshiping GOD in spirit and in truth.

It is true, your lordship, at a convenient distance, has made mention of the jews, but in what manner, and with what propriety, shall be considered by and by.

In the mean time, my Lord, permit me to ask, what fellowship hath Christ with Belial, the Turk, or the Pope? Hardly so much as he had with Moses. What help then can your lordship's argument receive from these instances, unless your lordship could prove that the forms in these three systems had and have a greater tendency to beget practical religion in the heart, or were more effectual admonitions to bad men to repent, or to good men to grow better, than the forms in other rituals? How the case stands in that respect, let us now inquire.

"In the heathen world their superstition was "the chief subject of statuary, sculpture, "painting and poetry. It mixed itself with

" business, civil forms, domestic entertain-
" ments, and every part of common life."

Good my Lord; what is all this to us christians? Will any man say to us, go ye and do likewise? Should a masquerade in the Haymarket be advertised in honour of the nativity, or a ball at Ranelagh to commemorate the ascension, what would be thought of your lordship's bench if they did not to a man remonstrate loudly against it? A traveller would hardly now a days be deemed void of superstition, even by the moderate papists, who should pack up among his necessaries, a crucifix or a madona of exquisite sculpture, with a design to pay his devotions to it on such solemnities as might fall out during his journey?*

All, therefore, that, I conceive, your lordship can build upon this fact, is, that " though
" the rites themselves were superstitious, yet
" might they still have a good effect in bring-
" ing the thoughts of religion to mens minds,
" and in being subservient to promote the
" reality and power of it." To which I would humbly answer:

1. That the reality and power of heathenism were little worth promoting by any means: and what the philosophy of those times and countries

* *Morem mihi habeo, quoquo eam, simulachrum alicujus Dei inter libellos conditum gestare; eique diebus Festis Thure & Mero & aliquando victimis supplicare;* says *Apuleius*, [Apology page 296. Lugd. Bat. 1623] at a time when paganism had received its finishing touches from the refining platonists. The learned Mr. Warburton has suggested, on very competent evidence, that Apuleius's adversary was a christian; this evidence is founded on the remarkable contrast between the two men in point of reverence for religious forms; the use and value of which a whole college of jesuits could not set forth with more elegance, pertinence, or colour of reason, than is done in this apology.

contributed towards the bettering of the human heart, was founded upon principles (as I doubt not but your Lordship very well knows) which derive little honour on the popular religion and forms of worship.

2. That I am very credibly informed by the testimony of St. Paul and St. Peter, that the heathen superstition had no such good effect. The former of these apostles, writing to the Ephesians, says, that *the unconverted* Gentiles *walked in the vanity of their minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the* LIFE OF GOD, *through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart:* and that *being past feeling, they gave themselves over unto lasciviousness,* to work *all uncleanness with greediness.* Chap. iv. 17, 18, 19.

And lest it should be thought that these gentiles might be no regular observers of forms, the same apostle, speaking of other gentiles who were *carried away unto dumb idols, even as they were led* (that is to say, who were under all the influence of idolatry, and consequently parties in all the forms and superstitions of it) says of them, that they were *fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards revilers, extortioners.* 1 Cor. xii. 2. and chap. vi. 9, 10, 11.

The time past of our life, says St. Peter, *may suffice us to have wrought the will of the* gentiles, *when* we walked in lasciviousness, lusts,*

* There is no reason for translating this passage by, *we walked;* the participle πεπορευμενους no more agrees with ἡμῶν than with ὑμῶν: and Peter himself never thus walked: and though the apostle might condescend to rank himself with those who had in some degree wrought

excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable IDOLATRIES: *wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot.* 1. Peter, chap. iv. 3, 4.

This testimony of the apostle Peter is the more considerable, as it proves that these gentiles were not only under no restraints in these criminal excesses from the forms of their own religion, but even wondered there should be any other religion, which prohibited the same sort of licentiousness: and this was indeed a reflection that would naturally occur to those, who laid so much stress on the form and face of what they accounted religion, as to mix it with business, civil forms, diversions, &c. So much of the face and form could have no other effect but to extinguish the spirit and power of religion, even where the principles of it were much better.

Let us now see whether what the mahometans account religion does any more for them. "They," your lordship observes, "are ob-"liged to short devotions five times between "morning and evening."

To this observation I will take the liberty to subjoin a larger portrait of this people and their religion, drawn by the hand of a most elegant, candid, and sensible writer, and a clergyman of the church of England.

the will of the Gentiles heretofore, yet would he hardly charge himself with these specifical crimes. It would therefore, perhaps, be better to render it indefinitely, *who have walked:* in the Basil edition of the Greek Testament, 1543, instead of πεπορευμενους, it is πορευομενους; and *Curcellæus*, (perhaps upon better authority) hath put this among his various readings. If this latter is the true reading, the *walking* is limited to the Gentiles only.

" Their [the mahometan] religion is framed " to keep up great outward gravity and so- " lemnity, without begetting the least tinc- " ture of wisdom or virtue in the mind. You " shall have them at their hours of prayer " (which are four a day always) addressing " themselves to their devotions with the most " solemn and critical washings, always in the " most public places, where most people are " passing; with most lowly and most regular " prostrations, and a hollow tone; which are " amongst them the great excellencies of prayer. " I have seen them, in an affected charity, " give money to bird-catchers (who make a " trade of it) to restore the poor captives to " their natural liberty; and at the same time " hold their own slaves in the heaviest bondage. " And at other times they will buy flesh to re- " lieve indigent dogs and cats: and yet curse " you with famine and pestilence, and all the " most hideous execrations, in which way " these eastern nations have certainly the most " exquisite rhetorick of any people upon earth. " They know hardly any pleasure but that of " the sixth sense. And yet with all this, they " are incredibly conceited of their own religion, " and contemptuous of that of others: which " I take to be the great artifice of the devil " to keep them his own. They are a perfect " visible comment upon our blessed Lord's de- " scription of the jewish pharisees. In a word, " lust, arrogance, covetousness, and the most " exquisite hypocrisy complete their character. " The only thing that ever I could observe to " commend in them, is the outward decency " of their carriage, the profound respect they

" pay to religion and to every thing relating " to it, and their great temperance and fruga- " lity.*" For which two moral virtues the historian may probably be thought to have sufficiently accounted, without having recourse to the influence of their religious forms.

Here, my Lord, we seem to have every thing requisite to the efficacy of forms; here is great gravity and solemnity of appearance, constancy and regularity of performance, frequency of occurrence, with a mixture of religion in most, if not all, parts of common life, and what is the consequence? Not the least tincture of wisdom or virtue begot in the mind; an affected charity, indeed, for birds and beasts, but the extremest cruelty to the human kind; a decent respect for their own religion, but a petulant contempt for every religion but their own; and horrid execrations denounced upon those who profess any other. The hearts of these men, so lowly, so solemn, so punctual and so critical in their devotions, are still the receptacles of lust, arrogance, avarice, and the most exquisite hypocrisy.

From the turks then your lordship's argument can receive no aid; perhaps we may succeed better among the roman catholics.—" In " roman catholic countries, people cannot pass " a day without having *religion* recalled to " their thoughts by some or other memorial of " it; by some ceremony or public *religious* " *form* occurring in their way: besides their " frequent holidays, the short prayers they are

* Mr. Maundrel's first letter to Mr. Osborn of Exeter college, at the end of his journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.

" daily called to, and the occasional devotions " enjoined by confessors."

This, my lord, is the passage, which (taken along with your lordship's positions above laid down) may well give occasion of triumph to the papists, and of grief and resentment to all good christians and true protestants: for if true religion cannot be preserved among men without forms; and if *the frequent occurrence of forms in some instance or other, afford so many admonitions to bad men to repent, and to good men to grow better*, the consequence must be, that the romish religion, having more of these instances and more frequent occurrences of forms, is better than other religions, which have fewer of these instances and occurrences.

Nor is any thing saved by the intervention of the pagans, and turks, as if your lordship intended we should make no other use of the roman catholics than of the other two; what your lordship had called superstition in the former, becomes, in this period, religion, and religious forms, which the papists pretending, in their system, to connect with christianity, and your lordship giving no hint that this is no more than a pretence, a plain reader must needs take this as spoken by your lordship of the means and memorials of true religion, and will accordingly consider these as recommended to his practice and imitation.

Here it is likely your lordship may remonstrate, and say, that you have expressly distinguished the superstition of the roman catholics from their religion in the very next words. The words are these. " *By these means* [i. e.

by these memorials, ceremonies, public religious forms, frequent holidays, short prayers and devotions enjoined by confessors] "their "superstition sinks deep into the minds of "the people, and [by these means] their re-"ligion also into the minds of such among "them as are serious and well disposed."

But if your lordship holds with the church of England, (as I must needs believe you do) that the memorials, ceremonies, &c. of popery are superstitious and fond things, the means and the superstition, in that case, are one and the same thing, and to be considered in this sentence no otherwise than as a common and convenient vehicle of religion, necessary to sink it deep into the minds of the serious and well disposed.

And does your lordship think if superstition be once allowed to do this good service for true religion, that it would not quickly lose that invidious name, and be called (as indeed it would well deserve) by the more respectable appellation of necessary and important externals? And then who would not lament the fate and the folly of unhappy England for throwing so many of these valuable memorials to the *moles* and to the *batts?* Who would not deplore her blindness in being guided by a rule of faith and edification which gives her authority to treat these memorials, and every thing like unto them, in the very manner she has done?

I am not, my lord, of the number of those who deny to any people their just commendations in the regular practice and reverend profession of their religion, because it differs from

mine. But, to speak my heart's thoughts, I cannot afford to bestow any more or any other praise upon the papists, than just what the ingenious Mr. Maundrell above-cited hath given to the turks, viz. That, generally speaking, *a profound respect is paid by them to their own sort of religion, and to every thing relating to it.* But if there is any tincture of true wisdom, virtue, or piety in the individuals of that communion (as I trust there may be a great deal) I will be free to say, they derive it not either from the genius, or the modes of popery, which I hold with the great and good archbishop Tillotson to be, "in the *whole complex* of it, "a corruption of the whole design of chris-"tianity."* Whoever among them acts according to the gospel of Christ, deserts, in that instance at least, the genuine principles of the church of Rome, which being adhered to and followed as far as she would carry her votaries, will leave no man one moral or christian principle to act upon; all faith and duty as is most notorious, being resolved, in that church, under the pretence of infallibility, into an implicit belief of, and blind obedience to the *doctrines and commandments of men.*

As to particular papists, whatever their private sentiments or personal dispositions may be, it is well known, they must no longer continue to conduct themselves by these, than holy church forbears to call them to her service on some particular emergency; when that happens, all private obligations of justice and mercy must at once evaporate. Of this that

* Bishop Burnet's sermon at his funeral, page 9.

unhappy prince James II. has been given as an example by more than one of our historians. And if to this there is one exception in the whole range of popery, if there is a man, who, at the hazard of the censures of his church, will venture to do justice or shew mercy to a protestant, upon the true christian principle of disinterested charity, I will open my arms to embrace him as a brother, and require no other proof that he is no more a papist than the Mufti of Aleppo.

It would be well indeed for popery if it could stand a fair trial with mahometism. The musulman is clear of idolatry in his worship, and is so far honest in his religious malice, as he has the precept and example of his prophet for propagating his religion by fire and sword, and for treating all those with execration who do not conform to it; but what name is bad enough for those who would fix these infamous characters and principles on the meek and benevolent Jesus, the gracious Saviour of the world, who came into it to seek and to save that which was lost, and not to destroy men's lives, but to preserve them, whether they would receive him or not?

The excellent prelate so often quoted, and who had studied popery to the very entrails, was so far from your lordship's opinion *that its external forms sunk religion deep in mens minds*, that "he thought (as his right reverend "elogist has informed us) the idolatry and "superstition of the church of Rome did enervate true piety and morality; and that their "cruelty was such a contradiction to the meekness of Christ, and to that love and charity

" which he made the character and distinction " of his disciples and followers, that he re- " solved to sacrifice every thing, but a good " conscience, in a cause for which he was re- " solved, if it should come to extremities, to " be a sacrifice himself."

But perhaps these opinions, were only fashions of the times, seasonable enough for the days of these zealous prelates; possibly *we* may know better, and have some reason to believe that popery is become a *tame* and *peaceable*,* as well as an *edifying* superstition. Believe it who will for me, I shall still continue to make it a petition in my daily prayers, that neither we nor our posterity may have occasion to try.

Here it may be said that the edification is not placed to the account of superstition, by your lordship, but simply to the number and frequency of these memorials. If this is your lordship's meaning, I humbly apprehend it should have been differently expressed; and

* So Mr. Worthington, *Essay on the scheme and conduct, &c. of man's redemption*, p. 156. To the fact a satisfactory answer has been given, in a small piece intitled, " The true Spirit of Popery " displayed," printed 1746; and another more at length, in a pamphlet printed the same year, viz. " Popery always the same." —But here it may be proper to rectify a small mistake in the first page of the former of these pieces. The excellent author of the *Considerations on the State of the World*, &c. there cited, has indeed expressed his hopes, that the cruel spirit both of popery and mahometism may be abated; and for the ground of these hopes with respect to the papists he cites Mr. Worthington, as above, and, with respect to the mahometans, *Sale's notes on the Koran*: and consequently is no farther answerable for the facts than these authorities will support them. For the rest, this honest worthy writer, not attending to doctor Law's context and reference, has put Mr. Worthington's words into the mouth of Mr. Sale, who is only an evidence for the Mahometans, and a better, I doubt, than the papists have to produce.

some instance given of a religious system with an equal number and variety of rites which are void of superstition; but such an instance, I believe, would be hard to find; and after all I am afraid that when we want to illustrate any thing of this kind, we must still bring our examples from roman catholic countries.*

And therefore, to do as much justice to this plea as may be, let us ask, how comes it that these memorials are so numerous and frequent in roman catholic countries? The plain reason of which appears to be the frequent and numerous swarms of ecclesiastics in these countries, who would have nothing to do if they were not thus employed, and (what would be worse to them than that) who would have no pretence to amass and appropriate to themselves those sumptuous palaces and large possessions they enjoy, if they could not persuade the people that their function was necessary to keep up the sense of religion in their minds by this variety in the form and face of it.

I lay no stress here, my lord, upon the superstitious nature of the rites which these men perform. Some of their usages may be as innocent and as edifying as some of ours; and whether they are or no, they have that reputation, and must have it among those who would edify by them.

What I insist upon is, that these memorials

* One instance of this we have indeed in our own country exhibited in Deacon's catechisms; but this performance having in it "rather more foppery and superstition, than is to be found in the "popish ritual," will not help in the present exigency. They who desire to see an abridgement of this work, may find a very useful one in Dr. *Middleton's Preface to his Remarks on two Pamphlets, &c.*

could not be so frequently occurring in some instance or other, without a suitable number of men who have nothing else to do but to ply the people with them: and who are accordingly set free for this purpose not only from family cares, but from all public charges besides.

Now the account we have of these men, even from serious, well disposed and sensible persons in these very countries, is, that a large majority of them are idle and useless drones, and too often worse; that they are many of them intolerable incumbrances on the liberty and industry of much better men than themselves; that they occasion great inconveniences and disorders in private families, even by the influence of these memorials; and that, upon the whole, the edification of their ministry is in no reasonable proportion to the scandal of their lives.

Perhaps, my lord, it might be possible to devise a ritual as full of memorials and circumstantials as the roman, and which might have nothing of what your lordship may call superstition in it: but if still we must have a proportionable number of men to discharge the offices prescribed in it, how shall we avoid these grievances occasioned, as it should seem, by a multitude of such men? The ecclesiastics of the popish church are certainly bound to good behaviour by as strict and solemn oaths, professions, subscriptions, vows, and rules of their several orders, as it is possible to lay upon human agents. And yet, all it seems, without the desired effect.

Upon the whole, my lord, the more I consider these instances, the less am I able to con-

ceive for what purpose your lordship referred to them, or what practical use (consistent with our christian profession) we can make of them.

The externals of paganism have no better name given them in the new testament, than *abominable idolatries;* and from these what your lordship calls the memorials of popery, have, the very worst of them, been derived by very competent judges, and in a very legitimate pedigree. These then are equally useless to us; were they ever so full of edification, the very cast and temper of christianity prohibits the adoption of them; they *are the traditions and commandments of men;* and what can we contrive that will be equivalent to them in number and frequency, which will not be liable to the same objection?

The turkish washings and other circumstantials partake more of the jewish formality: but this, your lordship knows, is gone, never to be recalled by christians. Their prayers in public places, and where most people are passing, have a censure from our blessed lord, which will for ever discredit the like practice among his disciples.

If your lordship only meant in general to suggest that our religion should have a great and conspicuous part, as well as theirs, we must call for your lordship's authority for this, not from the third or fourth centuries, but from the scriptures. If this was required of christians, it is strange that our lord should promise his especial presence where only TWO or THREE where gathered together in his name. If this was to be ordered by councils, fathers, and bishops in ages posterior to the apostles, why

should our lord lay all the stress on worshiping God in *spirit* and in *truth*, i. e. according to the *word of God*? John xvii. 17. Or why should he direct his hearers to go and learn the meaning of those words of God in the prophet, I will have mercy and not sacrifice? Mat. ix. 13.

Again, if a great and conspicuous part in religion was necessary, why did not the Apostles take the appointment of it upon themselves, or rather why did they say so many things to discourage such appointment? To what purpose was Stephen's observation that the *most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands*?* Why should St. Paul add to this observation, that *God is not worshipped or ministred to with mens hands, as though he needed any thing*?† Why should he observe *that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink*,‡ i. e. is of a different nature from that kingdom which *stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and* CARNAL ORDINANCES IMPOSED *until the time of* REFORMATION‖? Why should these men say all this, if *after* this time of reformation, *other* magnificent temples, *other* conspicuous ordinances, *other* sumptuous ministrations and services of mens hands were to be *imposed* as necessary to preserve religion among mankind?

The spirit and tenor of what Christ and his apostles taught in this matter, is not only so uniform and consistent throughout with the rest of the christian dispensation, but is so fully justified in point of wisdom by the product of a contrary spirit in the christian church, as for

* Acts vii. 48. † Chap. xvii. 25. ‡ Rom. xiv. 17.
‖ Heb. ix. 10.

ever to discredit that idle pretence, that the simplicity of christian worship, enjoined and implied in the gospel, was only accommodated to the beginnings of it; to the times of poverty and distress. Was it not as easy for the apostles to have provided for better times, if other provisions were necessary for other times? Did they not foresee what the exigencies of future times would be? Have not the apostles said every thing that may point out the spirit, the ordinances, the corruptions, the cruelty of the church of Rome, and even the very impostor at the head of it? And can any one doubt but they would have precluded all this, and regulated the plan of the christian church by a precise and authentic ritual, if more of this kind had been either necessary or expedient than what they have left behind them in their epistles?

Alas, my lord, they found by too sorrowful experience the sad effects of the pride and hyprocrisy in which an attachment to and reverence for conspicuous externals had ended; they had sufficient warning from their heavenly master, and were not without a measure of sagacity themselves to discover, that the like causes would always have the like effects; and were not likely to set religion once more upon a bottom which had so miserably failed. It is too evident, I doubt, for the justification of these latter ages, that they never thought of this great and conspicuous superstructure, as in the least expedient for, or even void of mischief to the christian church; and if their successors had contented themselves to have enjoyed and left it in its original simplicity, there

would, I am persuaded, by this time have been both more christians in the world, and better sorts of them, than our later *ecclesiastical polities* have produced.

And now, my lord, after so much suggested by your lordship in favour of the roman catholic religion, it was natural to expect your lordship, in speaking of our reformation, should throw the balance pretty strongly in favour of that, by a full and concise representation of the errors and corruptions which gave occasion to it: what your lordship has thought fit to say on that head is, thst "our reformers "considering that some of these observances "were in themselves wrong and superstitious, "and others of them made subservient to the "purposes of superstition, abolished them."

Why truly, my lord, *this is no good report that we hear of these things*, but neither is it a very bad one. There may be some room to doubt, whether it be quite bad enough to bear our reformers out in this *abolition*, especially of those things which only *might be made subservient* to the purposes of superstition; for these very observances themselves being in their turn subservient to the purposes of true religion, it might be asked, who made our reformers judges in so critical a case? If the observances of popery were really means of sinking religion deep in the minds of serious and well disposed persons, was it a sufficient cause to separate a whole nation from the church in possession, that some of these observances were esteemed by our reformers to be superstitious? Is the church of England herself contented with this measure from the dissenters, who

have over and over objected to some of *our* observances in words full as strong as these of your lordship? And how have they been answered? Why, we say, that admit this to be the case, viz. "that some of our ceremonies "or observances are wrong and superstitious," yet is not this a sufficient cause of separation; such a cause as will acquit them of the guilt of schism, unless they can also prove these observances to be sinful; which, I trow, it will be hard to prove of any thing which is a means of promoting true religion.

An ingenious gentleman, and one, who, if I mistake not, has full as much respect for external forms as they deserve, seems to me to have put this affair upon a very different footing, in some considerations of a later date than your lordship's charge.

"Indeed," says he, "if idolatry was to be "now rooted out as it was in the reign of Ed- "ward VI. and an innumerable multitude of "other corruptions, and those of the most "heinous nature, to be removed, or reformed, "the secular powers, in case the clergy could "not be persuaded to examine their own state, "would be excusable, and something more "than excusable, in doing it for them, and "in rescuing religion from such abominations, "even in opposition, not only to the majority, "but to the whole body of the clergy."*

This is honourable to, and a full justification of our reformers. Instead of some wrong and superstitious observances, and others subservient to the purposes of superstition, there

* Free and impartial considerations on the free and candid disquisitions, page 4.

were, it seems, idolatry and an innumerable multitude of other corruptions and abominations of the most heinous nature to be rooted out; which, surely, was enough in all conscience to justify a reformation by the interposition of any class of men.

But now, my lord, on the supposition that, your lordship has told us the *whole* truth, how will this gentleman come at his conclusion? If the observances of popery were barely *wrong*, *superstitious*, or *tending that way*, I greatly suspect this *considerer* would have thought the secular powers a little premature in their interposition, since he seems to be pretty clear that our secular reformers are only to be justified on the supposition that things were in the disorder he hath represented.

On the other hand, my lord, this gentleman's premises will equally distress your lordship in their turn; for if the memorials and observances of popery are no better than idolatries, corruptions, and abominations of the most heinous nature, by what kind of operation will they become the means of making religion, as distinguished from superstition, sink deep into the minds of the serious and well disposed? Your lordship goes on:

"Our reformers (having abolished the ob-
"servances before mentioned) reduced the form
"of religion to great simplicity, and injoined
"no more particular rules, nor left any thing
"more of what was external in religion, than
"was, in a manner, necessary to preserve a
"sense of religion itself upon the minds of the
"people."

Not quite so many rules or externals, I should think, if what goes before and what follows be true: but to let that pass as none of my business, your lordship by this account of our rules and externals seems to bear extremely hard on great numbers of serious and, to all appearance, well disposed persons.

Your lordship has been reminded above of a people, professing christianity, called quakers:* besides these, are many thousands of protestant dissenters in this kingdom: there is too the body of the scottish nation, and great numbers in protestant countries and communions abroad, among whom the form of religion is reduced to much greater simplicity, who have not so many particular rules, and have much less of what is external in religion, than what was left us by our reformers, nor have they any thing equivalent to many of our rules and externals.

Shall we say of these that they have not a sense of religion itself preserved upon their

* It is so far out of all *orthodox* rule to allow the *quakers* to be christians, that I am right glad, on this occasion, to borrow a little authority from a late sensible writer, whose judgment no man will call in question who has any tenderness for his own. The writer, I mean, is the Rev. Mr. Adams, the author of a late Essay in answer to Mr. Hume's Essay on miracles. This Mr. Hume, it seems, lays claim to the Quakers as fellow professors with him in the mystery of deism. To which Mr. Adams answers, "It is certain that the "Quakers profess the belief of christianity as universally as any sect "whatsoever. And what right has the author [Mr. Hume] to "charge a whole body of men with such flagrant insincerity." Essay page 130. In return for this little aid, and to make some amends for mentioning his name in a pamphlet whose subject is not of the respectable sort, I do hereby give that gentleman, my poor, but most hearty and sincere thanks for this and every other passage in his accurate and unanswerable essay.

minds? How is this to be proved, and who among us will undertake it? That is to say, who will undertake to shew *in what manner* our rules and externals are *necessary to preserve a sense of religion upon the human mind,* which, I suppose, in respect of impressions from external religion, is, in most, of the common people of all denominations, framed and capacitated pretty much alike?

I will not be positive what some of our high churchmen may have asserted and maintained in this matter of rules and externals, because I have not all the books of our very warm apologists at hand: and I know too that some of the warmest of them have been disclaimed and given up by others who are warm enough themselves.* Of our externals these defenders have said, that they are innocent, significant, and expedient; conducive, and (perhaps some of them may have added) necessary to the *bene esse* of the visible church: but to make them *in any manner necessary to preserve a sense of religion upon the minds of the people,* is a strain of merit, which, I fancy, very few of our highest churchmen have ventured to ascribe to them.

It should seem however, that our earlier reformers themselves had no such notion of this use and virtue of our forms and externals: the remaining histories of those times afford us sufficient proofs that some of the best and wisest of them would not, if they could have helped it, have left us so much. And even such of them as laboured the other way, have left rea-

* So, Montague, Heylin, Thorndike and Parker are given up by Dr. Nichols. Defence, page 168, 169.

sons of a very different sort from this suggested by your lordship.

In the convocation of 1562, it was debated, as we are told by bishop Burnet, whether the greatest part of our festivals, the cross in baptism, kneeling at the communion, the surplice, and organs, were to be retained or dropt. And the question, it seems, was carried for these externals but by one vote of a proxy, whose principal, it is probable, knew little of the debate; and of those who were present the majority were against the rites.*

We likewise learn from the same right reverend historian, that the single reason for retaining these forms, entered in the record of these proceedings, is, that "the laying them "aside, would be contrary to the authorized "book of common prayer." Whence it appears that even they who opposed the abrogation of these things, did not so immediately think of their *necessity to preserve a sense of religion upon the minds of the people*, as of the danger of a *præmunire*, of which this convocation stood in great awe, as appears by the postscript subjoined to their subscription of the XXXIX. articles.†

Concerning one of these forms, there is a remarkable passage in one of bishop Taylor's books, which may help us to conceive the value put upon things of this sort by the church of England herself. "There is reason to ce-"lebrate and honour," says he, "the wisdom "and prudence of the church of England,

* Hist. Reformat. Vol. III. page 302, 303.
† Bennet's Essay, page 198.

" which hath in all her offices retained but one " ritual, or ceremony, that is not of divine " ordinance, or apostolical practice, and that " is the cross in baptism."*

Now the sign of the cross, simply and of itself, that is to say, without some explanation, can, I should think, convey or preserve no sense of any thing upon the mind; and accordingly the church informs us that this sign of the cross is made " in token that the person " baptized shall not be ashamed to confess the " faith of Christ crucified" &c. and indeed it must be owned, that if it is an effectual token of this, the sense of religion to be preserved by it is very important.

And yet, strange to hear, the church herself declares that " without doubt a child bap- " tized *without* it is lawfully and sufficiently " baptized." So that there is no necessity, we see, for this form to preserve the sense of any thing.

I do not pretend to understand bishop Taylor's suggestion that *all the rest* of our rituals or ceremonies are either of *divine ordinance* or *apostolical practice*: but however that may be, there is one even of these, that it should seem, the church has less value for still, or lays, at least, less stress upon it.

For though the surplice is often mentioned in our ritual, on some occasion or other, yet are we on none of these occasions told of what the surplice is typical or significative; and Dr. Nichols is extremely angry with the puritans for pretending that this garment is used by the

* Doctor Dubitantium, page 668.

church in token of purity of life, "because, "says he, it is a thing which she never once "mentions*;" and so leaves the people to gather any or no sense of religion from this form, as they think fit.

But is then the sense of religion preserved upon the minds of the people by these rules and externals? Nothing like it. "A great part of "this is neglected by the generality among us: "for instance the service of the church not "only upon common days, but also upon saints "days; and several other things might be "mentioned." *Page* 15.

Was I not in the right, my lord, to conjecture that our reformers might leave us not so many rules or externals as are necessary? How should our people have fallen into this deplorable neglect, if these means, memorials or admonitions had been sufficiently frequent?

Permit me however to observe that your lordship and the ingenious author of the Considerations above cited, are not at all better agreed about this fact, than the other concerning the popish errors discarded by our reformers.

This gentleman having noted that a party in the nation [meaning the dissenters] have all along had some exceptions to our public service; goes on to say, "but then there is ano-"ther party [the members of the church] far "more considerable than they, who, in gene-"ral, are not only satisfied with, but even FOND "OF our present liturgy and constitution."† How is this to be reconciled? can it be said that

* Defence, page 293.

† Free and impartial considerations, page 6.

our people in general are *fond of* what the generality of them neglect?

Here again too, my lord, your lordship and this gentleman, by adopting each other's premises, must lose your several conclusions: your lordship thinks it "highly seasonable to "instruct the people in the importance of ex-"ternal religion."

More seasonable now, upon account of this neglect. But why so, if this gentleman's later intelligence be true, viz. that the people are really fond of our externals already?

On the other hand, if the service of the church is neglected by the generality among us, it certainly cannot be so very dangerous to make alterations in it as this gentleman would have us believe.

However, my lord, I am ready to close with your lordship in this representation, rather than the *Considerer;* and upon occasion of your lordship's mentioning the people's neglect of the service of the church upon saints days, I will trouble your lordship with an observation of my own, tending to illustrate the value of external religion.

Our common people, it is true, pay little religious regard to the feasts of *all angels* or *all saints*, but yet I have observed them to celebrate some of our protestant festivals, as well as some others of popish extraction, particularly shrovetide, with the several solemnities of horse-racing, bull-baiting, cock-fighting, &c. and with all the ceremonies of drinking, gaming, swearing, and lewdness incident to, and inseparable from, entertainments of that kind.

Among our politer parties, indeed, pleasure is the employment of every day; and they are free enough from superstition in this article to esteem every day alike: whereas the vulgar always take the advantage of the churches appointment for their times of idleness and revelling; and I know, at this hour several very worthy and very zealous members of the church of England, who scruple not to affirm, that the riotous and licentious pastimes of christmas, easter and whitsuntide, contribute more to corrupt the minds and debauch the morals of our common people, than any other assignable cause whatever. If this be true, it were certainly more for the credit of our common christianity that the festivals should be expunged from our books and calendars, than that these brutal, paganish, profane, and therefore wicked pastimes and disorders should claim any alliance, or have any connexion with the solemn commemorations of the birth and resurrection of the spotless and undefiled Saviour of the world.

Upon what grounds the apostolic authority for such forms is alledged, may be judged in part from the tenor of the scriptures above quoted, as well as from others, testifying the disposition of St. Paul towards occasional solemnities of that kind.

And there is the stronger presumption that they have no such authority, in that we seldom or never find them enjoined, but we find them also in company with large indulgencies to the carnal man; as if the more conspicuous externals in religion could not subsist without the aid of the sensual appetite.

Thus, as your lordship has observed, "the "externals of paganism mixed themselves with "the diversions of those days." In popish countries, the people are politically enough prepared for and reconciled to the formalities of lent, by the licentiousness of a preceding carnival. Nor have we of the reformed church of England been entirely free from this wretched policy.* It was once the humour of our great churchmen to magnify externals, and to render them as conspicuous as they could on all occasions: the nation at that time was not universally disposed to come into this; and some men of reputation enough set themselves to oppose it; in this exigency of her affairs the church bethought herself of purchasing the favour of the people by a book of sports: and how far that may have contributed in its day, to perpetuate the festivities of these solemn times, and to wear out the religious use of them, may be worth the inquiry of those whom it concerns.

Your lordship proceeds: "Thus they [the "people] have no customary admonition, no "public call to recollect the thoughts of God "and religion from one Sunday to another."

And why have they not, my lord? There is a most express law for it. "All priests and "deacons are to say daily the morning and "evening prayer, either privately or openly, "not being let by SICKNESS or some other URGENT cause. And the curate that ministreth "in every parish church or chapel, being at

* "The christian world is now divided into the reformed and "unreformed: or rather into those who ARE NOT and those who "are members of the church of Rome." Mr. Jortin.

" home, and not being otherwise reasonably " hindered, shall say the same in the parish " church or chapel where he ministreth, and " shall cause a bell to be tolled thereunto a " convenient time before he begin, that the " people may come to hear God's word, and to " pray with him."

It is not then the fault of the people, if they have not a customary admonition or public call from one Sunday to another: the curate in any parish cannot be reasonably hindered every one of the six intermediate days, and every week in the year. And yet we are told by a gentleman who seems to have taken some pains to be informed, " that in ten thousand churches " there are not five hundred where a bell ever " tolls, or where morning and evening prayer " are said upon a week day throughout the " year."*

This gentleman's account of this neglect seems to be so reasonable and probable, and at the same time so different from what your lordship has suggested, that I will take the liberty to give it at length.

" To what end," says he, " was such an ap- " pointment set down in the book of common " prayer? Did our mother the church vainly " boast of her own piety, or pretend to a *form* " *of godliness, without the power thereof?* No, " truly, the mother meant well; but her sons " and daughters are to blame. Like people, " like priest. But indeed were the clergy never " so willing to discharge their duty in this

* Virtue revived, or Britain's fall protracted, &c. by a Pluralist. Printed for Oswald, 1747. page 4.

" respect, not many are the places where they " can have any sort of congregration to join " with them. But is not the length of the ser- " vice the unhappy occasion of this neglect? " Would not the people's attendance upon the " public worship take too much of their time, " and too greatly interfere with their secular " affairs? Does it not cause a weariness, and " become tedious to delicate ears? Is not the " cold sometimes so piercing, as to make it " painful to tender constitutions, to be so " long detained from the fire, especially to hear " psalms and chapters they can almost say by " rote*?"

Your lordship sees that this gentleman is of opinion that there is too much of our externals, and that great inconveniences arise from the length of our service, to those who should edify by it; and to this also agrees the author of the Considerations before-mentioned.† What then must we think would be the case if those memorials were as frequent as in roman catholic countries?——Our author goes on:

" Then again the clergy have journeys and " visits to make, are idle, are not devout, have " their diversions, do not reside upon their cures, " are hindered, sometimes reasonably, oftener " without reason. So that, by general consent

* To these reasons for this common neglect may be added another, viz. the aukward times of saying morning and evening prayer in most places: ten or eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and two, three or four in the afternoon, the time when tradesmen and mechanicks are in the very throng of their honest labour.

† " You are not indeed singular in your opinion of the too great " length of our service. And to tell you the truth, my own senti- " ments upon this head are pretty concordant with yours." *Free and Imp. Considerations*, page 41.

" of both priest and people, as to any outward " or public acknowledgment of a Deity for six " days out of seven, a foreigner, that should " make his abode with us only for six days, " might have reasons to doubt, in the greatest " part of England, whether the inhabitants of " that happy island did, in truth, believe the " existence of that gracious and Almighty be- " ing."

Now, my lord, which way soever we consider this compounded cause of neglect, we cannot avoid the question, by whom is it to be redressed? If the fault be in the body of the clergy, by whom are *they* to be reformed? If in the nature and frame of our present forms, by whom are these to be amended?

So far indeed as the clergy are accessaries to this neglect, it is extremely right in your lordship to lay it before them. But what would your lordship have the clergy to do or say in this case? Let them insist as long and as loudly as ever they will on the importance of external religion, I am persuaded, their rhetorick and their arguments will be in vain, whilst the people find themselves incommoded by the present state of their own externals: they will appeal to the reasonable and merciful design of the gospel, and plead their christian liberty against all human ordinances which not only edify not, but are even burdensome: and they will have reason.

We are now arrived at your lordship's account of the importance of external religion, as grounded on the scriptures.

Before I could procure a sight of your lordship's printed charge, a friend who had seen it,

or heard it read (I forget which) had given me a general but pretty just account of this part of it, concerning the *importance of external religion;* which set me upon amusing myself with conjectures by what kind of gospel authority your lordship would revive the credit of a doctrine, which of late years, had not had many abettors among protestants.

I had often thought with myself that the church of England had been more pressed upon this matter of externals in her controversy with the dissenters, than upon any other article: and I cannot say, that the answers given by our apologists have convinced me that our adherence to some specifical rites in our church, in a sort of contempt of the good effects which might be hoped for from dropping them, is very edifying or very laudable.

Our church claims a power of decreeing rites and ceremonies in her twentieth article, without exhibiting her scriptural warrant for it in any copies of these articles published by authority, that I know of; unless the vice-chancellor of Oxford's *imprimatur* may be allowed to give a public sanction to Mr. Welchman's edition of them. Mr. Rogers's book indeed carries in its front a pretence to the lawful authority of the church of England: but as there is no evidence what that authority was, or how obtained, there is room to doubt; besides, Rogers, in explaining the authority of the church with respect to controversies of faith, says that this authority is given to the church, and to EVERY MEMBER OF SOUND JUDGMENT in the same,* which, I doubt, will extend the

* On the XXth article, page 103. Edit. 1625.

freedom of every member to the usage of ceremonies, *a fortiori;* contrary to Mr. Welchman's account, who restrains the authority, in both branches, to those *quos penes est ecclesiastica auctoritas.*

Under this clause, concerning rites and ceremonies, Mr. Welchman has referred to Esther ix. 27, 28. and to John x. 22, 23.* to which Dr. Nichols has added 1 Maccab. iv. 56.†

The passage of Esther informs us that the jews in commemoration of their deliverance from the slaughter projected by Haman, instituted the feast Purim [of lots] and ordained that it should be kept and remembered by the whole people of the jews at an appointed time of the year.—The dedication of the altar by Judas and his brethren, and the ordinance for celebrating that incident from year to year, is a fact of the same sort, and the inference commonly drawn from these histories is, that the jewish had, and consequently the christian church has, the authority spoken of in the article.

But I very much question the solidity of this reasoning; for when it is considered that the former of these feasts was appointed by Esther and Mordecai only, it should seem that the jewish church had about as much to do in this affair as our church has in the appointment of our state-holidays of Nov. 5th, May 29th, &c. and how much that is, may be seen in the several acts of parliament relating to those days, and his Majesty's orders set before the forms of prayer appointed for them.

* XXXIX. Articuli Eccles. Anglic. page 22.

† Defence, page 307.

In the latter case, Judas and his brethren with the *whole congregation of Israel* ordained &c. v. 59. but how far our divines, and particularly Mr. Welchman, would admit either of these to be the sense in which the word church is to be taken in the 20th article, I cannot take upon me to say: "by the power of the church "[says the learned Mr. White, one of the "latest of our advocates] to decree rites and "ceremonies, is meant a right in the pastors "and governors thereof to ordain and ap-"appoint such things, so as to make it ordi-"narily the duty of the people to conform to "them*." Which Mr. White must mean exclusively of the right and authority of the civil powers, or he will not get clear of his adversaries objection; and if Mr. White will not admit the civil powers into his definition of the church which decrees rites and ceremonies, much less will he take into it the *whole congregation*, because that would be going into the enemies quarters for good and all.†

These precedents, therefore, are neither of them for our purpose, except they may receive aid from the subsidiary passage in John, which, as we have it in our translation, informs us that Jesus was walking in Solomon's porch at the time of the feast of the dedication and when it was winter; and from that circumstance our commentators determine

* Defence of three letters, page 10.

† Dr. Nichols or his translator [for he did not live to translate his book so far himself, vid. Pierce's Vindication, preface] expresses himself with more room.---"They who have been at the "HELM of ecclesiastical affairs have instituted---have not with as much power?" Def. page 306.

this to have been the feast instituted by the Maccabees: for otherwise the jews had divers *Encænia*, and the word χειμων may possibly denote only a storm, as in Acts xxvii. 20.

Well but what of this? "Why," says Dr. Nichols, "this feast was honoured with our "lord's own presence." How honoured? Did our Lord join in the celebration of it, or in any part of it? The context says not a word of that. Our Lord honoured the pharisees with his presence so far as to eat with some of them: it is great odds but at such a time there might be some *washing of cups and platters*, &c. But will it follow that he did any honour to these traditions by his presence?

The plain truth is, our blessed Lord took no exceptions to times, places, or persons, when, where, and among whom he had a prospect of doing good; and I should think that cause not overstocked with merits, which wants to draw his appearance among the jews, at a time when great numbers were assembled together, into a precedent for christian conformity to human rites.

And this consideration will, I apprehend, abate the force of what the pious and learned bishop Burnet has offered in behalf of this clause in the XXth article, with respect to our Saviour's conversation among the jews, where he has certainly strained one point to favour the church, and that is by applying our Saviour's observation Matth. xxiii. 23.——*And not to have left the others undone*, to *rites* and *lesser matters* in general.*

* Expos. Folio. page 193.

Our blessed lord is there speaking of the case of tything only, and minute and insignificant as those articles may seem to be, about which the pharisees and scribes were so exact, yet had they an express and positive law for tything them *all*, namely, Levit. xxvii. 30. *And* ALL *the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the* LORD's; *it is holy unto the Lord.* A case surely widely different from that of *rites* and *lesser matters*, of which the law makes no mention.

For the rest, though this excellent prelate has, with a vein of piety and good sense peculiar to himself, said every thing, that can be said with any colour of reason, for externals established by human authority, yet hath he, upon the whole, made a case of it not the most favourable to the present circumstances of our church, and much less such a case as will fall in with your lordship's positions.

Having, as I said, my lord, often reflected on these defences of our externals, without receiving that satisfaction I very sincerely sought for, I was in hopes to meet with some new light from your lordship's discourse on this interesting subject; and was not a little disappointed when I found *not one* text quoted by your lordship from the new Testament, and *but one* from the old, relative to the importance of external religion: and what that passage will avail your lordship, I am now to examine.

Your lordship, having observed that our people "have no customary admonition, no pub-"lic call to recollect the thoughts of God and

"religion from one Sunday to another," proceeds thus:

"It was far otherwise under the law. *These* "*words*, says Moses to the children of Israel "*which I command thee*" [your lordship omits THIS DAY, viz. the day when the ten commandments were given in Horeb, which words were just recited in the foregoing chapter, and are the words here referred to*] "*shall be in thine* "*heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently* "*unto thy children, and shalt talk of them* "*when thou sittest in thine house, and when* "*thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest* "*down, and when thou risest up.*" Duet. vi. 6, 7. To which your lordship subjoins: "and "as they were commanded this, so 'tis obvious "how much the constitution of that law was "adapted to effect *it*, and keep religion ever in "view."

It was then very ill, or at least very unwisely done to abrogate that law whose constitution was adapted to so excellent a purpose: but the truth is, my lord, the constitution of the jewish law was just as much adapted to effect the performance of, or to keep in view the religion here meant by Moses, as the music and vestments in your lordship's cathedral at Durham are adapted to promote *family religion* and the

* Compare Jerem. vii. 22, 23, with Exod. xix. 5. 6. The Right Reverend and worthy bishop Story, in his admirable treatise on the priesthood, observes that "after Moses had been the first "forty days with God in the mount, he brought nothing down but "the two tables of the moral law, as if NO OTHER law had been "then intended; but when he found the people—worshipping the "golden calf, God seemeth then to have resolved—to load them "with a number of religious rites and ceremonies, in direct opposition "to the customs of the Egyptians," &c. page 62.

weightier matters of *judgment*, *mercy*, and *faith*, in the rest of the diocese.

Moses in the two next verses goes on thus: *And thou shall bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house and upon thy gates.* Now both the frequency and proximity of these domestic signs, make it very plain that the great and conspicuous parts of their religion, the public calls which they had by the constitution of their law, were not adapted to effect, what Moses in this passage wanted to have effected, viz. obedience to the moral law.

For it is to be observed of these signs, that they were not (like ceremonies properly so called) symbolic representations, but the precepts themselves exemplified in writing, which it is true, in process of time, were abused to the purposes of superstition*; and when that time came, and these natural and simple signs and memorials had degenerated into *broad phylacteries*, &c. they then received their condemnation with other things which had a more natural tendency to such abuse. A sufficient intimation, one would think, to all future times, of the incroaching nature of superstition, which could convert these expedients of plain and useful instruction, into implements of mere ostentation and hypocrisy.

* The rabbins in after-times had made these signs so useless to some jews in respect of their original purpose, that they enjoined them to be written only in one sort of character. "*Ad phylacteria* "*& schedas liminares haud alios quam assyriacos characteres* "*adhibere licet, in libris vero sacris describendis, literis etiam* "*Græcis uti conceditur, sed his solis,*" &c. *Maimonidis* apud *Wagenseil* SOTA, page 970.

I should have thought, indeed, that there were some expressions in this passage cited by your lordship, that might have kept any man out of this mistake, and prevented his confounding the words there spoken of, with the words of the ceremonial law; which latter it surely was never intended that fathers and masters of families should teach their houshold: this kind of teaching was the sole privilege and duty of the priests, who had indeed no commission to teach any thing else,* and that, as I said above, made this moral teaching, these domestic and familiar signs so much the more necessary.

So that I very much question whether your lordship could have fallen upon any passage in the old testament, which relates at all to your subject, that would have been less favourable to your lordship's argument.

But to proceed; your lordship adds: "and "without somewhat of this nature, piety will "grow languid even among the better sort of "men; and the worst will go on quietly in an "abandoned course, with fewer interruptions

* "We shall find it [what the priests were to teach] was not "the whole law of Moses, but the ceremonial law only, the laws "about external religion, or religious worship. For as the essential "part of their office was confined to positive and instituted worship, it "is natural to believe that their teaching was of no greater extent." Bishop Story on the priesthood. Page 26. It is humbly recommended to the reader, being a clergyman of the church of England, not to content himself with these detached passages, but seriously to read over this valuable performance, where he will have the satisfaction to see how little the ministrations of a christian priest have to do with ceremonials and externals, and from thence may judge, if he pleases, with what propriety he should employ himself in preaching up the importance of them.

" from within than they would have, were re-
" ligious reflections forced oftner upon their
" minds, and consequently with less probabi-
" lity of their amendment." Page 16.

From what operation of externals on the human mind your lordship collects this theory, I cannot presume to say; I, for my part, believe that the piety of good men may be maintained in its vigour with very little of this nature: and this I am pretty sure of, that if religious reflections must be forced upon the mind by externals, it is not a small somewhat of this nature that will do the work.

But to speak freely: this method of forcing religious reflections by ceremonies and external forms, I doubt is stark naught: according to your lordship's doctrine, it should be not only *good policy*, but *wholesome discipline* to *force* men in England to come to church, and in France to go to mass; in both places for the same reason, namely because the dissenters (whose objections to ceremonies and outward forms are the same in both kingdoms) have not so much of externals as is *necessary to preserve a sense of religion itself upon the minds of the people.*

And yet, my lord, the very best of this force has seldom produced any thing better than hypocrisy.* Probability of amendment there can

* " En Poitou et en Xaintonge &c. les menaces les plus fieres,
" les coups de bâton, la terreur et l'insolence du soldat suivent
" de près les premieres sommations. Par ce moyen on ne manque
" pas de gagner beaucoup de gens, dans un siecle où la veritable de-
" votion est rare par-tout, et la France fort miserable. Ces Mes-
" sieurs les convertisseurs ont trop d'esprit pour n'être pas con-
" vaincus que tous ces changemens sont feints. Ils voyent que ces

be little or none where men attend religious solemnities merely to avoid punishment or censure.

There is then no forcing religious reflections this way. But perhaps your lordship might mean, that "forms and externals have in themselves an inherent and natural virtue to force religious reflections upon the mind, and to work piety and repentance upon the heart." And this, indeed, I should have thought the more obvious sense of your lordship's words, had it not been that I thought it also the less defensible of the two, because it will be impossible to prove this to be true of one sort of forms and not true of another; and what a door this must open to all manner of superstition and even idolatry, may be easily conceived:* it being indeed the very principle on which the papists justify the adoration of images. But neither even thus do we get clear of the other kind of force; for if externals have this virtue to inforce religious reflections, &c. it must be right to *compel* those who are indisposed to such reflections, to attend these memorials; and if, as your lord

"nouveaux convertis ne vont à la meſſe pour la plûpart que le moins "qu'ils peuvent, qu'il faut les èpier et les menacer, ſi on veut qu'ils "y aſſiſtent.—Ne violá-t-il pas un deſſein fort apoſtolique?" &c. BAYLE *Critique generale de l'Hiſtoire du Calviniſme de Mr. Maimburg, Tom.* I. *Let.* VIII. page 134, 135.—Here we have occular teſtimony of the good effects of forcing religious reflections upon the mind by the means of external religion; and as theſe (and the ſame will hold good of other ſyſtems) are to be thus ſeconded ere they can have even theſe effects, may we not juſtly conclude that forms have naturally no force or efficacy of their own to diſpoſe the mind to religion.

* The prolific nature of externals is repreſented to the life in the excellent Biſhop Fleetwood's *Letter to an inhabitant of the pariſh of St. Andrews, Holbourn*, Works, Fol. 725, 726.

ship has observed, the people are now in general negligent in their attendance, I do not see how compulsion of some kind can be avoided.

But instead of conjecturing how your lordship would explain this matter consistently with protestant principles, I will beg leave to exhibit the very different accounts we have of the beginning and progress of religion from the apostles.

He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, for without faith it is impossible to please GOD. Heb. xi. 6.

If it be demanded how we may obtain faith, the apostle Paul answers, *Faith cometh by hearing* [or *report*] *and hearing by the word of God.* Rom. x. 17.

Is then faith the whole of religion? No. To faith must be added, *virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness,* and *charity; for if these things,* says the apostle *Peter, be in you and abound, they make you to be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord* JESUS CHRIST; that is, they perfect and complete your religion. 2 Pet. i. 5. &c.

But are not forms and externals necessary to remind the people of these things? I should think not; any farther than hearing the word of God may be so called. If more was necessary, here was precisely the place where Peter should have inserted his ritual;* for in this

* Peter not only omitted his ritual here, but unhappily forgot to leave it behind him: for even the papists themselves could never recover more of his missal than the Lord's prayer. *Nuda primo hæc erant* (says Platina, speaking of the ceremonies of the mass) *et omnia*

very place he is *endeavouring* that his readers *might have these things always in remembrance after his decease*, v. 15. and yet nothing appears of these endeavours besides his religious exhortations and instructions in these two epistles.

That external objects are in some cases useful, and in others necessary, to remind us of our christian duty and devotion, is true enough. *The heavens declare the glory of* GOD, *and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.* Psalm xix. To excite us to particular acts of charity, it is sometimes necessary we should SEE *that our brother hath need.* But where a man is blind and deaf to these natural and familiar admonitions, there is, I doubt, but little hopes of his becoming all of a sudden pious and charitable on the sight of a church, even of a cathedral, a temple made with hands, and where, if the scriptures deceive us not, we know the most high dwelleth not, in any higher sense than he dwelleth in other places where two or three are gathered together in his name.

It was, we may well suppose, some considerations suggested by these and the like passages of scripture, which gave occasion, "in "most ages of the church, to the care of rea- "sonable men to draw the people off from lay- "ing too great weight upon external things; "upon formal acts of piety;" and for this care, your lordship allows, there has been, for the most part, occasion. But, your lordship goes on, "the state of matters is quite changed now "with us. These [external] things are neg-

simpliciter tractabantur. PETRUS *enim, ubi consecraverat, oratione Paternoster usus est. Auxit hæc* MYSTERIA *Jacobus, &c. Vit.* SIXTI I. A hint which protestants should have taken long ago.

" lected to a degree, which is, and cannot but
" be attended with a decay of all that is good."

Strange and miserable reverse of things! What was a reasonable care in most ages of the christian church, and for which there has been for *the most part* occasion; and a care too, as it plainly appears, excited by the very genius and spirit of the gospel of Christ, is at length superseded by a change of which we have had no warning, nor had any reason to expect; and it is now become highly seasonable to lay the weight on, where reasonable men had all along taken it off,—" highly seasonable now to in-
" struct the people in the importance of ex-
" ternal religion."

Is then the gospel of Christ so fickle and changeable, that it's provisions and expedients of eternal life may be accommodated, like human politics, to the humours and interests of every faithless and perverse generation? No, my lord, the means of salvation through *Christ* are like their ever blessed author, *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.** *Other foundation can no man lay, than is laid.*† If in any state of the christian church it was reasonable to depreciate the *beggarly elements* of external religion, it is just as reasonable at this very hour.

Far would I be from fixing upon your lordship's words an insinuation, that the care of reasonable men above mentioned hath in any degree contributed to the *decay of all that is good.* Yet surely your lordship should have apprized us here, how this decay and this neglect came in company together; and what de-

* Heb. xiii. 8. † 1, Cor. iii. 11.

pendance they have upon each other: your lordship's silence on this head you will give me leave to supply, from some memoirs of a very good judge of such matters.

"I have ever esteemed our reformation from "popery a great work, and bless God for it "daily; and yet I am sometimes apt to call "some of those, who have had the title of reformers (especially of the latter sets in Queen "Elizabeth's time) very little men; and think "*they* rather deserve the character of reformers, "who laboured, at the expence of their ease "and subsistence, and sometimes of their lives, "to convince the nation that, as christians "and protestants, we had common principles "and precedents enough in the new testament, "upon which to unite and to edify each other, "without having recourse to idle and unnecessary human inventions. These men could "hardly ever obtain an equitable or even a "patient hearing from the people in power; "who never, that I can learn, gave any better reason, for not taking the course recommended to them, than that these outward "circumstances were indifferent things, and "that they had authority to do as they pleased "about them."

"Later ages have had the advantage of adding to this weighty argument, that of long "possession; and what is there that human "authority and antiquity together, have not "coined into religion? And thus it is, that our "externals have been blown up so far beyond "their natural size and significance; and have "so long taken place of better things, that we

" seem to have forgot where we began ; and " most of us are as much at a loss in this age " for true religion as ever. But though these " pieces of antiquity will do little for our com- " mon people, whoseem, indeed, of late to care " as little for them as wiser men; yet they will " still do for one sort among us : they will save " them a great deal of trouble, and perhaps " something else, which they might otherwise " sustain by being put into a laborious course " of reforming and edifying the people com- " mitted to their care, by the toilsome methods " of the gospel. Let you and I be silent, and " make as good a shift with them as we can ; " for, assure yourself, we shall have nothing " better in this age."*

Whether this account of the decay of all that is good, or your lordship's has more of truth and reason in it, must be left to the judgment of the public ; in the mean time, permit me humbly to represent to your lordship, that, in our present circumstances, 1. It is not seasonable to instruct the people in the importance of external religion; and, were it seasonable, that 2. It is not practicable to revive any greater reverence for our own external religion, than it has at present, by any sort of instruction whatever.

1. Instruction in the importance of external religion is not seasonable. That popery is gaining ground upon us daily, is a matter of fact attested by very considerable witnesses. Besides others of no obscure estimation in the

* From a private letter written 1738.

world, an eminent and leading prelate* hath on two public occasions, one in 1745, and the other 1750, given the nation warning of it: what the consequence of this may, and if it goes on, must be, is easily apprehended. "Every heart alienated from the protestant re-"ligion [to use the words of the same judicious "bishop with a little variation] carries off with "it a pair of hands from the defence of our "gracious king and his government."†

I will not say but there may be different ways of accounting for this increase of popery; but of this I am certain, that there is not an argument for it, which can be supposed to influence our common people, that does not derive it's weight from the value and importance of external religion.

And this deserves to be considered by *us* of the church of England so much the rather, as the dissenters affirm, "that the converts to po-"pery are gathered from our church by thou-sands, whereas it is hardly ever known that "one is gained from them."‡

When I first met with this interesting fact, I bethought me of consulting Mr. White's defence to see what consolation might be had from that: and his answer, which is remarkable, I shall now set down, as greatly to my present purpose.

* Bp. Sherlock in his Sermon on the late rebellion, and in his Letter to the clergy and people of London and Weſtminſter, upon occaſion of the late earthquakes.

† Thankſgiving Sermon before the Commons, June 7, 1716.

‡ Diſſenting Gentleman's 1ſt Anſwer to Mr. White's Letters, page, 12.

This gentleman, having intimated, "that "the suggestion may be groundless, or, if "true, may be well accounted for by the dis- "proportion in the numbers belonging to each "party;" goes on thus: "and if more in pro- "portion to the the number of each, have been "gained from amongst us, the reason why, is "not that which he has suggested [viz. the "concessions in xxth article of our church] "but another, even the multitude of sects that "are among us. We, for the most part, are "educated and instructed in just notions of the "nature, unity and communion of the catholic "church, maintained in the church of England, "and of the great importance and necessity "thereof; while their people are, generally, so "instructed, as to have no kind of notion of "these matters, or, if any, it is only of the "no-necessity, or rather, the insignificancy "thereof. And hence it is natural for our peo- "ple to be more easily scandalized at those "schisms and divisions which they see among "us, and more susceptible of impressions from "the artful insinuations of romish emissaries "concerning them. This is far more like than "that he assigns to be the true reason that more "converts,"* &c.

See here, my lord, the Dissenter's charge not only confessed, but clearly made out by this acute advocate for the church of England!— "Far more like?" Why, is it not the very same, only pushed more home, and exemplified in plainer and stronger terms?—The church of

* 1st Defence, page 16.

England claims a power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith, and thereupon founds the necessity and importance of unity and communion with her. —Here the romanist strikes in and says, "Aye, "but the church of England does not pretend "to be the catholic church, and consequently "can maintain no such claim. The catholic "church is with us, and us only, and it is there "that you must look for the necessity and im-"portance of unity and communion."

It is therefore for the honour of the church of England, to observe that she gives none of her members any such notions of unity and communion as Mr. White pretends. She acknowledges and prays for all as members of the catholic church, who "call themselves chris-"tians, and hold the faith in unity of spirit in "the bond of peace and in righteousness of "life." The visible church of Christ she defines [Art. xix.] to be "a congregation of faith-"ful men, in the which the pure word of God "is preached, and the sacraments be duly "ministred according to Christ's ordinance "in all those things that of necessity are re-"quisite to the same;" and what is not "of "necessity requisite to the same" she tells us, Art. xxxiv. viz. the rites or ceremonies of every particular or national church "ordained only "by man's authority."

What just notions now can the church of England give, consistently with these her capital doctrines, of the importance, and more especially of the necessity of communion with her, or with any other particular or national church

where the peculiar distinctions are human rites and ceremonies, or, in your lordship's language, forms and externals? And how should her members who are justly educated and instructed, be scandalized at divisions, at which the church herself is not scandalized? For my own part, if there is any man who teaches or propagates any such notions, as tend to create the scandal and susceptibility of romish insinuations that Mr. White speaks of, I am for having him severely censured as an unsound member of the church of England.

In agreement with these doctrines and definitions, it is absolutely necessary to understand the word Church in the xxth article. So Mr. Rogers understood it, namely for *every member of sound judgment in the same;* and Rogers, writing under the wing, and probably by the direction of Bancroft [as high a churchman as ever presided in it, Laud excepted] was not likely to go below the sense of the church in his exposition; whatever sense may have been put upon the words since those days, concerning which I think the church of England (much, I am afraid, to her loss and detriment) has been too silent and passive.

And here I cannot but stop a while to contemplate the dexterity of our champions in shifting their ground, and changing their batteries against the dissenters. Heretofore it was pretended that our sects were the spawn of the jesuits, that jusuits had been known to mix among them, and that many of their tenets were the same with those of that order of men,*

* There seems to be an inclination in a late learned and spirited writer, to fix a charge of this nature upon the methodists [*Enthusiasm*

But surely the jesuits were viler politicians than ordinary in this misapplication of their craft; the sectaries, in virtue of their education and instruction it seems, havs stood their ground, and bid defiance to all their artifice; while the members of the church of England—but forbid it heaven that this should be the truth of the case; and as Mr. White himself, and more than he are disposed to question the fact, may I with all deference to your lordship's bench humbly suggest, that this matter may be examined to the bottom, and satisfaction given to all his Majesty's faithful and affectionate subjects; which may easily be done by their lordship's requiring punctual answers to two short queries, sent to the minister and churchwardens of every parish. viz. 1. How many persons in your parish have been perverted to popery within these last—years? And 2. How many of those so perverted had been of the church of England, and how many of them protestant dissenters, and of what denomination? But,

2. I am afraid, my lord, instruction in the importance of external religion would, at this time, be unseasonable on another account; the people who would most want these instructions are, it is doubtful, uninstructed not only in the importance, but in the very principles of any religion. The ignorance of our common peo-

of the papists and methodists compared, Part ii. page, 179. to the end.] Whether popery will thrive better in this new sect than it has done in those of longer standing, time must shew. However, what this ingenious author says, about the middle of page 178, is well worth remarking, annd not foreign to the case in hand.

ple even in those religious matters which are easiest to understand, as well as to remember, I mean the historical passages of the new Testament, is hardly to be conceived by those who have not had some particular occasion of conversing with them on these subjects; much less do they know the saving truths of the gospel; and the terms of eternal life grounded on that history: would your lordship have the instruction of this sort begin at the importance of externals in religion? These at the best are but useful or edifying as modes of expressing the faith or piety that is already in the heart: but what protestant or christian use can *they* make of them, to whom externals have nothing to convey worth their having, and who have nothing in their heads or hearts to express by their means? But,

2. It is not practicable, I imagine, to revive any greater reverence for our own externals, than they have at present, by any sort of instruction. For.

1. If the stress of this instruction is to be laid on the edifying nature of the things themselves, they have had their weight for a course of no less than two hundred years, and can naturally make no stronger impressions than they have done. Every argument has been offered in their behalf which the most ingenious and learned men in the kingdom could think of. And if it might be supposed that new arguments and topics in their favour could be found out; yet, if, as the honest gentleman above quoted has remarked, these externals are inconvenient and disgusting in the practical

part, these new argumenss will be so far obstructed in their operation, and fail of their effect.

2. It will be remembered that there have been men in our communion of equal judgment, and, perhaps for the most part, in equal numbers, who have been differently persuaded concerning the edification to be had from our forms: neither will it be forgot, that these very forms, comprized in the word, Church, have given countenance and occasion to much disorder and ill temper, and to much faction and fury in the kingdom; and though this circumstance of itself should be no argument against the things themselves, yet it will be made one, and I doubt more pains must be taken to teach people to distinguish in such cases, than the clergy well can, or will be willing to spare from other business. The intrigues of Charles the second's time, and the inconsistency of the act of uniformity with his two declarations, nothing can gloss over. A late sensible and sufficiently cautious writer, whom I have quoted above, has indeed ventured to hint that the government at that time in making this law had some sense of inconveniences, and were directed by considerations of propriety in the alterations they made in our service. His words are these: "At the time of the restoration of the church "and monarchy——our liturgy had been out "of use, as well in private as in public assem- "blies, almost twenty years. Yet it is ob- "servable, that even then, the government "was so sensible of the inconveniences of any "great alteration in forms which the people

" had yet some remembrance of, as to think it " proper to direct the commissioners, appointed " to consider of those things, to avoid, as " much as may be, even all abbreviations that " should be found unnecessary."*

Here we see the establishment of so much more than some people hoped for, or, considering the declarations abovementioned, had good reason to hope for, is ascribed to *sensibility* and *tenderness* for the people; perhaps this writer may believe so, and persuade some others to be of that mind.

But however that be, the sheets of this pamphlet were scarce dry from the press, when another made its appearance, in which the author gives us leave to think very differently of this matter. What *he* says of the *Act of Uniformity* is as follows. " How these words, *to the use of*, " came to be omitted out of the express form " of words that are ordered to be read in church " for a legal qualification, I cannot say, nor " whether they were omitted out of neglect or " by design: but, I own, it seems to me, when " I consider the humour of the times when that " act was made, that it was done with design; " as a SNARE to oblige poor conscientious men " who did not read the act of parliament at " length, to give up their livings, rather than " declare their unfeigned assent and consent, " to all and every thing contained in *the book* " *of Common Prayer*."†

* Fr. and Imp. Confid. page 5, 6.

† The author subjoins this note: " And accordingly there were " 1800 persons, that were actually deprived of their livings rather " than submit to the terms prescribed"—and, it is worth our notice, *deprived* by an *abbreviation*.

Your lordship here sees two very different opinions of the men and times when the Act of Uniformity, which establishes our present externals, was made. If the opinion of the latter is to be regarded, all may not be right with the externals themselves in favour of which such a base and cruel artifice was projected. It is true, the other gentleman would give us a different idea of the disposition and councils of those times; but why should we believe the one, rather than the other? If, as common fame reports, and the gentleman himself intimates, the Considerer published his work under the wing of authority; the other declares himself to be *a clergyman of the established church.* And the Essay speaks sufficiently for his good sense and integrity. And, if he also may have the aid of common fame, his station in the church is in the highest rank.

These are difficulties, my Lord, which, when they fall in a clergyman's way, will greatly obstruct his instructions in the importance of our externals. Nor,

3. Do I apprehend he will have much better success in urging the authority of the church. The time was indeed when the language of most of our clergy was, *Stir not a step out of the direct paths of the church;** and then considerable numbers of the people were inclinable enough to listen to them. But the state of matters is quite changed with us now in this respect also; and many accidents have intervened, which will prevent our retreating into

* Memorial of the church of England, in Cobe's Detection, Vol. iii. page 247.

this stronghold, or, however, our fortifying it into a tenable post.

The incomparable bishop Burnet, in the Dedication of the third volume of his History of the Reformation, printed 1715, has these remarkable words. "Your majesty, we trust, is "designed by GOD to compleat the reforma- "tion itself; to rectify what may be yet amiss; "and to supply what is defective among us; to "oblige us to live and to labour more suitably "to our profession; to unite us more firmly "among ourselves; to bury, and for ever to "extinguish the fears of our relapsing again "into popery; and to establish a confidence "and correspondence with the protestant and "reformed churches abroad."

We have here the testimony of one bishop how little expedient it was to adhere, without deviation, to the paths of the church: about the same time more of them gave their united opinion of the consequences of this doctrine of the memorial to this effect:

"We are the more concerned, &c.—because "some who have valued themselves, and have "been too much valued by others, for a pre- "tended zeal for the church, have joined with "papists in these wicked attempts,"* &c.

Since this time it hath been observed, that our great churchmen in general have, greatly to their honour, laid aside much of this ignorant and impatient zeal of contending to the uttermost for every appendage to the church of England; they are known to be friends to to-

* The bishops Declaration testifying their abhorrence of the rebellion, 1715.

leration, and to have more moderate and equitable sentiments concerning some particulars in our present ecclesiastical establishment, than their forefathers expressed.

In these circumstances it would be in vain for the inferior clergy to attempt to build any great matters in favour of external religion upon a zeal for the church; accordingly that spirit hath also greatly subsided among them, and one perhaps might go back some years without finding any thing of that furious kind in print, which used to pester the public in the days of Sacheverel.*

One thing, indeed, my lord, there is in all this, which I find amuses thinking people a good deal: since a departure from the paths of the church is, of late days, neither so offensive to church or state, as heretofore, but, on the contrary, may very well be borne with, it is wondered what should hinder a free and impartial inquiry whether the paths of the church are really so direct as to admit of no just amendment, and especially as some suggestions to the contrary have been offered to the public, which appear to many pious and judicious members

* So I thought, when I wrote this. But sauntering into a book seller's shop, not long after, the first thing I laid my hands on was a pamphlet, written, as the title-page imports, by something of a *Presbyter*, which, on the first opening, exhibited a character of the petition to parliament from the city of Bristol, in favour of a bill for the naturalization of foreign protestants, in the decent terms of *an attempt to fill the nation with beggars and schismaticks.* I am told the supposed author is an elderly man. What a miserable time must he have had with this teazing, hunger-starved, solitary demon of schism at his elbow for the last twenty or thirty years?—But, quere—What is the proper religious appellation of an English protestant of our national church at Geneva?

of the established church to have great weight, and will, I apprehend, be another means of rendering ineffectual our instructions in the importance of external religion, as it is circumstanced in our church at this time.

For my own part, my lord, I am firmly persuaded that if every thing be absolutely right in the church of England, our forefathers acted not only more wisely, but more righteously than we, in compelling people to come into her, and in distressing those who would not: on this supposition, all who deviate from the church deviate from the word of God (for that is the church's rule) and ought on no account to be tolerated. But if there is any considerable room for amendment and alteration for the better, we are, upon our own principles of *proving all things by the word of God*, evidently condemned; stirring, in fact and *in practice, not a step out of the paths of the church*, even whilst the most of us perhaps are conscious that some of these paths are far from being so direct as the application of our great rule would make them.

In the year 1718, when the bill for repealing the *Occasional* and *Schism Acts* was in debate, bishop Kennet defined the church of England to be, *a scriptural institution upon a legal establishment:** with which definition I have always been extremely pleased, and at the same time extremely desirous to have it verified.

Concerning the legality of the establishment, there is not, nor can be, any dispute: it will

* Tindal's Continuation, octavo, vol. xxvii. page 240.

admit of no controversy among those who hold all their civil rights and privileges under the same authority which establishes the church; the question upon which we are chiefly divided, has been concerning the scriptural institution. A point, which, in reverence to an higher legislature, should certainly among protestants be equally clear: if this matter is not yet sufficiently decided in our favour, * it is by no means expedient to take it for granted, or to consider it in the light of a point of honour, since by such indolence, or such arrogance, we are losing the most valuable advantages and benefits of our establishment; the true original end of which undoubtedly is, the edification of the people of God, worshipping him with one heart and with one mouth: nor can we ever be justly vindicated, by barely conniving at, and permitting the separation of so many of our christian brethren, upon scruples so important to them, and, as we are oftentimes driven to confess, so little important to us.

"Where unity and peace are disregarded, "devotion must be so too, as it were by natu- "ral consequence:" † and disregarded out of all doubt they are, whilst we suffer it to remain a question (which has some undeniable probabilities against us) *whence and by whom the of-*

* Whether it is or not, we may form some judgment, perhaps, by the controversy between Dr. Nichols and Mr. Pierce, and more lately between Mr. White and the *Dissenting gentleman*, &c. &c.

† I have borrowed these words from the 17th page of a sermon preached at Halifax in Yorkshire, July 1751, by John Watson, A. M. fellow of Brasen-Nose college in Oxford, and curate of Halifax: which if any man, who has sixpence to spare, will purchase, peruse, and lay to heart, he will lay out his time and his money very well.

fence cometh. If that may not be clearly determined by the word of God, it will not be very easy to ascertain the grounds upon which so severe a wo is denounced against the offender.

So that, my lord, in whatever light we consider this subject, it is neither seasonable nor expedient, nor at all conducive to revive practical religion in the hearts of our people, to preach up the importance of externals in general, or of our own in particular.

The *importance of external religion* is the grand engine of the papists, which they play with the greatest effect upon our common people, who are always soonest taken and ensnared by form and shew; and, so far as we concur with them in the principle, we are doing their work, since if externals, as such, are important, the plain natural consequence is, the more of them the better.

On another hand, our advocates for the church observe and declare, "that our controversy "with the protestant dissenters is not about "matters of faith, for they subscribe the same "articles of faith that we do;" consequently the dispute is about externals and forms; and to instruct the people in the importance of our own peculiar modes, as distinct from, and exclusive of any other, is to widen this breach, and weaken the protestant interest this way too; and not to revive practical religion, but to foment and inflame contention, and every evil work.

In the next place, the excellent author of the *Essay on Spirit* says, that "a man who sub- "scribes only for peace sake, and the preser- "vation of the outward forms of society, may,

"for prudential reasons, honestly subscribe "and submit *to the use of one* established form, "though he, in his own private opinion, may "think *another* to be better." There is, my lord, great reason to believe, that the honest and thinking subscribers among the clergy of the church of England are, many of them, in these circumstances. With what heart and conscience can these men set about instructing the people in the importance of any thing which they believe to be not so edifying as something else in the room of it would be?

Upon the whole, that a practical sense of religion is at a very low ebb among all ranks of our people, I very readily agree with your lordship; that this matter ought to be very seriously considered by christian ministers of all orders and degrees, none will deny; whether the method pointed out by your lordship in this part of your charge, is so likely to revive either the credit or the influence of religion, as some other methods described and enjoined in St. Paul's charges to Timothy and Titus, or whether indeed your lordship's method is at all proper for the purpose in our present situation, —and lastly, whether our externals in religion, and the circumstances, appendages, and conditions relating to them do not rather obstruct than forward true christian edification, is freely submitted to the judgment of the serious, disinterested, and impartial part of the public, and most humbly recommended to your lordship's second thoughts, by,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most respectful servant, &c.

POSTSCRIPT.

IN the 12th page of this charge, your lordship speaks of the *law of virtue written upon our hearts*, as a topic proper to be insisted on by the clergy from the pulpit; by which, I suppose, your lordship may mean what is commonly called the *law, or the religion of nature.* Now, my lord, if there is really such a *law written in every man's heart*, will it not clearly follow, that religion may, and indeed must be preserved among mankind, whether there is any outward form of it, or not?

I should think too, that, whatever becomes of external forms in religion, it greatly concerns your lordship, that this doctrine of a natural law should be, not only true in a philosophical theory, but fairly exemplified in a practical system, visible and intelligible to the whole world; your lordship having expressly asserted elsewhere, that "if in revelation there be found "any passages, the seeming meaning of which "is contrary to natural religion, we may most "certainly conclude, that such seeming mea-"ning is not the real one."* But who can possibly conclude thus, till he has a most certain system of natural religion to interpret these seeming meanings by?

The first time I took particular notice of this passage, was in a controversial pamphlet upon

* Bp. Butler's Analogy, page 160.

the case of subscription to the xxxix articles of our church, where it was cited, as I remember, to discredit subscription, even to the scriptures, explained any otherwise than by the subscriber's own sense of them, without admitting any man, or any body of men, to judge of the orthodoxy, the truth, or the propriety of that sense; and I thought this authority from your lordship very full to the writer's purpose.

But how will this agree with the importance of external religion, the great support of which among us, is subscription to human forms and compositions? Are these externals written in our hearts too, and a part of the code natural?

However, it is but justice to your lordship, to observe, that this incautious doctrine of the analogy is most effectually confuted by an observation of your lordship's in this very charge, page 11, viz. "The infinite greatness of GOD's "scheme of government, both in extent and "duration, together with the wise connexion "of its parts, and the impossibility of accounting for the several parts, without seeing the "whole plan of providence to which they relate; which is beyond the utmost stretch of "our understanding.

I am very sure your lordship will not make the least difficulty of admitting the several dispensations and circumstances of revealed religion to be parts of this scheme of government, this plan of providence: as, therefore, to see the wisdom, propriety, or connexion of all these parts, or to see the whole plan of providence, is beyond the utmost stretch of human understanding, to which this great interpreter, natural religion, pretends only to be commensurate,

what should hinder us from concluding, that many seeming meanings in our bibles may be real ones, any thing to the contrary in natural religion notwithstanding.

To speak my own sentiments freely, I have no better opinion of the clearness, certainty, uniformity, universality, &c. of this law of virtue written in the human heart, than I have of the importance of external religion: there is a circumstance attending this doctrine which renders the truth as well as the merits of it extremely doubtful, and that is, that in its application to practice, it is not only not useful for want of proper explanation, but, so far as it is understood, exceedingly pernicious to the principles and morals of our common people, and, to say the truth, to the great as well as the small vulgar.

The certain consequence of referring mankind to a *law of nature or virtue written upon their hearts*, is, their having recourse to their own sense of things on all occasions, which being, in a great majority, no better than family superstition, party prejudice, or self-interested artifice (perhaps a compound of all) will be too apt to over-rule the plain, generous, self-denying and humble precept of the gospel, after all that can be said to disgrace them; and much more when they pass for the dictates of natural religion, and people are told into the bargain (which, I am afraid, is too often the case) that these dictates differ no otherwise from those of the gospel, than as the latter are enforced by more explicit promises, and positive authority.

If therefore natural religion (be it what you will as to its intrinsic merit) is liable to be thus

mistaken, it is high time to have done with it in the pulpit; very few of our common people are philosophers, or can see far enough into the nature of things to analyse virtue into its component parts; and if they are once led into a mistake so favourable to their own conceits and prepossessions, no subsequent explanations will serve to set them right: for having sent them to their own heads and hearts for a rule of life, you will be greatly disappointed if you expect they will allow you to manage it for them.

Upon this account, my lord, I would have religion proved, defended, and taught by the christian minister from the bible only; and I would have every such minister plainly and honestly tell his people that he has no other proof of its original, its truth, its obligations, its present benefits, or its future rewards, to lay before them, than what is contained in the scriptures; which I would also have him to exhort them to search and study for themselves with the utmost diligence and application; and then he may safely let the rest be at their own peril.

And here, I cannot but take notice, before I make an end, of my singular misfortune in differing from one of your lordship's distinguished merit, and eminent station in two so considerable articles, as, *a law of virtue written upon our hearts*, and *the importance of external religion*, which, indeed, it is not common to find among the favourite opinions of one and the same man.

Perhaps it may be as uncommon to find them in disgrace with one and the same man: but so it happens: I have had a long, and, as I am

verily persuaded, a reasonable quarrel to them both, as well on account of the unfriendly contrast between the theories on which they are severally supported, and the genuine grounds of the christian dispensation, as for the incredible mischief they have done to practical religion; being adopted as principles by infinite numbers of our people who neither know the meaning of the one, nor the uses of the other, and to whom they have been, in different ways, instruments to mislead them from the wholesome and living waters of the gospel, to the broken and muddy cisterns of human sufficiency and human authority. To the first we owe the flourishing state of infidelity and its legitimate progeny, a profligate corruption of manners, among all ranks and degrees of our people; to the latter we are beholden for the progress and advancement of popery (the basest and most shameless of all superstitions) to the manifest hazard of our civil and religious liberty, which will be no longer safe than our gracious and righteous sovereign, and his protestant descendants, are secure from the incessant and diabolical machinations of romish emissaries; from which may God's good providence continue to protect them; in which prayer, notwithstanding my opinion of the tendency of your lordship's doctrine, I am perfectly assured, your lordship will join with,

My Lord, (once more)

Your Lordship's, &c.

A

SERMON

PREACHED TO A

LARGE CONGREGATION

IN THE

COUNTRY,

ON

FRIDAY, January 5, 1753;

BEING

The Day distinguished in the ALMANACKS for this present Year,

BY THE TITLE OF

OLD CHRISTMAS-DAY.

By the Vicar of the Parish.

[FIRST PRINTED, MDCCLIII.]

plied with your little fancies and prejudices, in some things contrary to my own judgment, that, if possible, I might prevail with you, by such compliance, to consider, or, as the case required, to act for your own good in other things of more importance.

You may well expect, therefore, that I should give you some satisfactory account why I have not been so yielding now as at other times; and that I am now going to attempt, not without great hopes, that if I may but have an attentive hearing, and an impartial judgment on your part, I shall dismiss you very well satisfied with me, and not dissatisfied with yourselves for attending at church without performing that particular worship which you designed: *I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.*

The first reason I will give you why I have not read the service appointed in our liturgy and calendar for Christmas-day, but only the common prayers and service for the fifth day of January is, that I am forbidden to do otherwise by law, and by the strongest sort of human law in this kingdom, namely, an act of parliament, which is a law made by the king, lords, and commons in the supreme council of this nation, to whom both you and I have given a full power to act for us on all public occasions, and in matters of a thousand times more concern to us, than the keeping of Christmas-day.

Now, had I, to oblige you, disobeyed this act of parliament, it is very probable I might have lost my benefice, which, you know, is all the subsistance I have in the world; and I verily

believe many of you would have been very sorry for that; but however I should have been rightly served; for who am I, that I should fly in the face of his majesty and his parliament.

The new testament, it is true, speaks of some things that *are hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes;* but I, for my own part, declare that I can find no revelations in the scripture (and I know not where else to look for them) concerning the proper time of keeping Christmas: and, therefore, I conclude, that so far as such things are necessary or expedient, they are left to be ordered by the higher powers; and in any such case as that, I hope I never shall be so conceited as to think myself wiser than the king, the whole nobility, and principal gentry of Great Britain; and though this affair may have something to do with religion, the ordering of which may seem to be more the business of the clergy, yet it would never have disturbed me if not one bishop, or not one clergyman in the kingdom had been consulted in this matter, because I know, from long experience, that our gracious sovereign is so merciful and upright, that nothing in the world will ever prevail with him, willingly and knowingly, to pass any law which enforces any thing sinful, or is even hard and grievous to the consciences of his subjects.

Now I have it from good authority, as I will convince any of you that desire it, that our gracious sovereign king George gave his consent to this act of parliament most readily and willingly, as a law that would not do the least harm to religion, and would moreover be of

great service to his own subjects, in carrying on their trading correspondence in foreign countries, where the time has been reckoned in this (which you think a new) way, for almost 170 years; and you will agree with me, I am sure, that which is good for trade, cannot be bad for us, who are so much obliged to it for the necessaries of life.

I should not have mentioned this circumstance, but that I understand you have been told, that Christmas-day was altered by the lords of the regency, while his majesty was abroad this last summer: which is so stupid and so impudent a lie, that I cannot imagine who could be so wicked, and, at the same time, so weak as to invent it: for the lords of the regency could have done no such thing if they would. The alteration, not only of Christmas-day, but of all the days in the year, was made, as I have said, by an act of parliament; and no act of parliament is of force without the king's consent, which his majesty gave to this particular act, the year before he went last abroad, and it actually took place on the first day of January, 1752.

You pretend, I know, to have better reasons than this for keeping Old Christmas-day, and so had you need; but I would have you to examine these reasons very well (and I will assist you to do it by and by) before you depend too much upon them: wherever we have good and true reasons enow for what we do, there it can do no service to mix bad and lying reasons among them: and whenever I find that palpable lies are told to defend or uphold any cause whatever, it is an argument with me beforehand,

that such a cause has nothing good or solid to support it; and I am now going to convince you that this is actually the case under consideration.

What you have farther to say in this behalf, amounts, as far as I can learn, to this. "Admit that there are forty acts of parliament "for the alteration of the day, yet, say you, "our bibles tell us, and so have you yourself "told us an hundred times, that *we must obey "God rather than man:* if Jesus Christ ordain "one thing, and the parliament another, we "must certainly obey our Saviour before the "parliament, who, even with the king at their "head, are but mere men, and have no such "divine commission for what they do as our "Lord had:" and then you go on and say, "that Christ must have been born like other "men on some certain day, and that you read "in some holy books, and particularly in Mr. "NELSON'S *Companion for the festivals and "fasts of the church of England,* that this day "was most certainly the twenty-fifth of December, and that the primitive christians always "observed and honoured that day, as the nativity of our Lord, with the greatest solemnity; and these primitive christians could not "but know the very day upon which Christ "was born, because the apostles kept it before "them, and to be sure, ordered all christians "to keep it for the time to come; and though "our blessed Saviour, out of his great humility, might not command such a day to be "observed, yet his apostles, being inspired, "could not but know what was fit and agree-

" able to the will of God to be done in such " a case; whence you will conclude, that it " must be the highest presumption for any " other sort of men to alter what was fixed by " the apostles of Christ and according to the " will of God."

I hope none of you will think that I have stated these arguments unfairly, or with less clearness and force than you could have urged them yourselves: if that should be your opinion, I will be at a fair bargain with you: bring any man who shall prove only so much of your cause as I have opened, and I will be bound to do any thing hereafter about Christmas-day that you would have me.

But indeed I am in no danger; for I will now tell you, what I know will surprise you very much, but what however is very true, and that is, that there is no man now in the world, nor very probably has been for above fifteen hundred years, who did or does know on what day our Saviour Christ was born: nay, I will go farther, and assert that no man in the world knows precisely how to fix the *year* in which this event happened, though there are considerable helps towards it in the histories of our holy evangelists: nor has any man reason to be ashamed of his ignorance in this matter, when he considers that St. Luke himself was not certain of it, saying only that our Saviour was *about* thirty years of age when he was baptized by John: why think you, would not the apostles inform St. Luke of this matter exactly, that he might have put it down in his history, and so have prevented all future disputes? I will tell you why; they were not careful to

keep any account of our Lord's age at all, and much less of his birth-day: it was enough for them that *Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,* without recording the day and year when; and why this should not be enough for us too I cannot tell.

I hope you will believe me, when I tell you that I have taken some pains to enquire into this matter, for my own satisfaction as well as yours; and I do assure you that all I am wiser is, that learned men are of different opinions about it, all of them equally probable, or rather equally precarious, for want of due information from those who certainly would have given it, had it been necessary; I mean the apostles and evangelists.

These learned men indeed have endeavoured to ground their several and opposite opinions, some one way and some another, on the scriptures; but have never been able to satisfy one another by this kind of proof, because it has been always indirect, and often only conjectural.

One of these fancies thus indirectly drawn from the scriptures, I will lay before you, because you will be able to understand it, which I cannot say of some others. We are told in the third chapter of St. John's gospel, that John the baptist being informed by the Jews and some of his own disciples, that the man to whom he had borne witness had begun to baptize, and had many followers, took occasion from thence to magnify our Saviour's character and office in comparison of his own; among other things to this effect he says, v. 30. *He must increase, but I must decrease;* from which words, occasion

has been taken to argue from the probability that John the baptist was born on the longest day in the year, because the days begin then to shorten or *decrease*, and that by the same rule, our blessed Saviour was born on the shortest day, after which the days are gradually increasing.

I do not recollect at present where I met with this acute observation, for I thought it not much worth my notice; but I suspect it is not modern; and, perhaps, if we could certainly discover what it was that first gave occasion to the fixing these holidays to those several seasons of the year at which they are now kept, it would prove to be this very conceit, or some other of equal importance.

Now, if you should be inclined to pay any respect to such traditions as this, you will have all the reason in the world to be satisfied with what the parliament has done in this matter, for new Christmas-day, and new Midsummer-day are certainly nearest the shortest and longest days of the year respectively, than the days on which these festivals were celebrated before the late regulation.

But I am almost ashamed to undervalue either your understandings or my own, by dwelling so long upon such a trifle; I would willingly hope, that the meanest capacity among you will easily discover, by turning to the passage in the gospel of St. John, that the baptist could have no such childish meaning.

For my own part, I am persuaded, that if either Christ or his apostles had appointed the observation of Christmas, they would not have left the world in such absolute ignorance of the

precise day of our blessed Lord's nativity; and I think it clear beyond all dispute, that if the apostles and the christians that came next after them, had observed any such day yearly, and had taught their followers to do so too, it is impossible that the day should ever have been forgot.

Mr. Nelson, who wrote the famous book about the festivals and fasts of our church, was, without doubt, a most pious and sincere christian, and, in other respects, a valuable man; I am persuaded he is *dead in the Lord*, and will, at the great day of retribution, receive a glorious reward of his labours, and so will any of you who, in proportion to your talents, are as good and useful as he was: but it is to be feared that Mr. Nelson laid more stress on this matter of keeping holidays than was convenient, or than the nature of the thing would bear, without better warrant from scripture than I can find he has ever produced: and I am afraid in some respects, such books do a great deal of harm.

For example, in the chapter concerning Christmas-day, Mr. Nelson says, "though the "day should be mistaken, the mistake being "of no greater moment than the false calcula- "tion of a day, will certainly be very pardon- "able in those who think they are not mista- "ken." Which plainly implies that the mistake is of moment to those who know it, or have reason to think that it is a mistake: now is not this enough to encourage your scruples concerning the late alteration, and to render you dissatisfied with the legislature for leading you into a wilful mistake, and more especially as the same Mr. Nelson has told you just be-

fore, that "there is little reason to doubt but "that this, which we now observe (that is the "day which we observed before this new re-"gulation) is the very day?"

But, however, I pray be so just to your governors and yourselves, as to consider with me, what authority Mr. Nelson has for saying this.

"The testimony of St. Chrysostom, says he, "is clear for the tradition of it." Alas! that a matter of this moment should be left upon the sandy foundation of tradition three hundred and eighty years after it happened: but to let that pass: would not one think from Mr. Nelson's manner of expressing himself that St. Chrysostom must have known of this tradition from his very childhood? And will you easily believe me, when I tell you that this very Chrysostom expressly says in that discourse to which Mr. Nelson's margin refers, "that it was not quite "ten years since he was informed, that this "was the very day?"

It is needless for me to enter farther into this matter, than Mr. Nelson has done; I know how far his authority goes with you: and indeed, in many things, he is worthy of your highest regard; particularly many of the prayers annexed to these discourses, are excellent; but Mr. Nelson, and every writer besides, should be read with a particular reverence for that caution of our Lord *to call no man master upon earth*, and with a particular care to examine all *the doctrines and commandments of men* by that standard of truth the *written word of God*, which we know was given us for a rule by *our master which is in heaven, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

From these particulars I will now conclude, that if our most gracious sovereign at the head of his parliament, had enjoined us to keep the feast of the nativity of our Lord on the twenty-fifth day of May, or the twenty-fifth day of August, they would have had as good reasons (for ought that appears in the original history of Jesus Christ) for pitching upon either of these days, as they had who fixed it to the twenty-fifth of December.

Nor is the authority of King and parliament a small matter even with Mr. Nelson himself in this very case: one of his questions in the very first page of his book is "are not holy "days enforced by the laws of the land?" In answer to which he refers us to several acts of parliament made in that behalf, and concludes that "in the act of uniformity the rubric and "the rules relating to the liturgy (and among "others those for the observation of these days) "are established by royal authority as well as "the liturgy itself." And I verily think, for my own part, that what Mr. Nelson here calls *royal authority*, is the very best authority we have for paying any religious respect to such days.

I would not willingly give offence to the meanest man or woman among you, nor do I mean it; but as you have in a manner constrained me, I will speak my mind freely upon this occasion, not knowing when I may have another so proper for the purpose. To be plain then, if it would have pleased you as well, it would have pleased me much better, if the king and parliament, instead of ordering us to keep Christmas-day eleven days before the usual time, had

ordained that not only that, but any other festival (our weekly Sundays excepted) should not be kept at all.

My principal reason for saying this is, that it would be much better no religious respect should be paid to such times, than that this respect should be accompanied with so much riot and luxury, so many superstitious and profane sports and pastimes, together with so much gaming, cursing, swearing, drunkenness and debauchery, as the yearly return of these times brings along with it.

I am at the best uncertain what authority we have (besides the statute law) for setting apart any times in honour of our Saviour and his apostles, save one day in seven: but I am as sure as the scriptures can make me, that such revels and disorders as are practised at Easter, Whitsuntide, and above all at Christmas, are most expressly contrary to the purity of the christian religion, and to the precepts and example of the blessed and holy Jesus.

How can we possibly suppose that the formal devotions offered by certain persons at a particular season, with a pretence of honouring Jesus Christ more especially *then* than at other times, should be acceptable to him, when other portions of the same season are on the very same pretence employed in dissolute revels, in gluttony and darkenness, and other vices and follies most contrary to the spirit and tenor of his whole gospel? Suppose, for want of more solid proofs of our obedience, any of us should say at the last day of account, "Lord, Lord, "have we not kept the feast of thy nativity "every year in honour of thy name?" might

he not, and will he not answer us with the greatest truth and justice; "*Verily I say unto you,* "*I know you not, depart from me ye workers* "*of iniquity.*"

Discoursing with some of you lately on this subject, I found you had been taught to say, that "the Lord's-day may be and is profaned, "by many licentious practices, as well as the "holydays of Christmas, would it therefore be "expedient that the solemn observation of that "day should be laid aside as this reasoning "seems to import?"

To this I answer, 1. That they who profane the Lord's-day among us are either such as have no great regard to religion at all, or else such as will confess that to profane the Lord's-day is a very wrong and sinful practice: whereas very conscientious people and such as observe Sundays with all due reverence, make no manner of scruple to spend their Christmas holidays in feasting, cards, dancing, and other diversions, which they would think very unmeet for Sunday work.

2. The two cases are very different in a more material circumstance; the observation of a seventh day is the subject matter of one of the ten commandments, and is consequently of Almighty God's own appointment; whereas there is not the least foundation in any of these commandments, or any other part of scripture for the religious observation of other holidays among christians; if there had been, we may be sure, the directions in one case would have been as clear and plain as in the other.

I know very well that some people (too many God knows) take great liberties on the Lord's-

day, and think, or at least say, that they are blameless; forasmuch as the fourth commandment was given to the Jews only: but was not this, I pray, the case of the other nine also? Were not they too given to the Jews only at the time they were given? Where do we read that Almighty God gave any such commandments to any other people; and when our blessed Saviour made it necessary for *his* disciples and followers to keep these commandments that they might *enter into life*, is the fourth any where excepted? And whereas it is said that the other nine have such reasons for their obligation, as concern all mankind in all circumstances and situations; I would desire to know in what circumstances or situations it does not concern all mankind as well as the Jews, that in *six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, which seventh day* THEREFORE *the Lord blessed and sanctified?*

I do not enter here into the reasons and authority for changing the sabbath from the last to the first day of the week; it is, I think, sufficient for you and me that one day in seven being set apart, we observe that as we are directed in the fourth commandment; the circumstance of keeping or appointing one day for another may be of moment to those who altered the day, if they had not good authority for what they did, which I believe they had; but if they had not, it can be of no consequence to us, who have it not in our power to rectify their error, and do sanctify our seventh day in obedience to the fourth commandment only.

Now if any commandment of God, or any precept of Christ or his apostles had laid as good a foundation for keeping Christmas-day, as the fourth commandment has for keeping Sunday, I should have paid the very same respect to the one that I do to the other; but I can find no such thing, except in some catechisms which the papists have set out, wherein indeed they have put down this for one of the ten commandments, viz. "*Remember thou sanc-*" *tify the holidays;*" which they do to cover their knavery and impiety in leaving out the second commandment, and at the same time, to mislead the common people into a belief that their superstitious institutions are of divine authority: thus do their wicked priests abuse the word of God first, that they may the more easily abuse the poor people afterwards.

For my own part I must freely confess, that I am so far from finding any injunctions in scripture to keep these holidays (I mean any injunctions in which christians are concerned) that I am much mistaken if I do not discern in the new testament very plain reasons and directions *against* such institutions.

And now I am coming to my text, when perhaps you may think it is almost time I should have done with it: and here you plainly perceive that the apostle Paul finds fault with the Galatians for observing *days* and *months* and *times* and *years;* he calls them, you find, *weak and beggarly elements;* which bring those who observe them into *bondage;* and lastly, he is afraid lest this very thing should render *the labour* he had *bestowed upon them* ineffectual and *vain.*

The question then is, what sort of *days* and *times* the apostle means? Mr. Nelson answers, "not christian festivals to be sure, for the observation of these is not forbidden in scripture; but those festivals of the Jews, which though abrogated, the judaizing christians attempted to impose upon the Galatians as necessary to salvation; contrary to the apostles endeavours of setting them at liberty in the freedom of the gospel, and to the doctrine of salvation by Christ alone; which might justly make him afraid of them."

Now I cannot but wonder that so wise and considerate a man as Mr. Nelson should not have reflected, that some of *our* festivals, as Easter and Whitsuntide were originally Jewish festivals; what reason then could Mr. Nelson have given, or can any other man give, why it is not as unjustifiable and as contrary to the apostles endeavours to impose them upon the christians of England, as the christians of Galatia?

For the rest I agree with Mr. Nelson, that the apostle had no christian festivals in his view, because he knew of none but *the first day of the week;* and had St. Paul been always regarded in the christian church as he should have been, I am verily persuaded that we should have known of no other at this time.

Mr. Nelson asks, as I have hinted above, "is the observation of such days as are in use "among christians forbidden in scripture?" and without any hesitation answers, no:—let me ask in my turn; is it commanded in scripture that christians should observe such days? I answer, no; nor has Mr. Nelson, or any other

man that I know of, ever pretended to prove it: thus far then it is a moot case; and we must, according to St. Paul's rule, go on to prove these days, and, according to our Saviour's rule, to prove them by their fruits.

Now, if it shall plainly appear from your own experience, (the surest sort of trial) that christian holidays so called, are really no better than *weak* and *beggarly elements*, that they bring men into *bondage*, and have a plain tendency to defeat the end of christian instruction, with respect to the true and real means of salvation, then they certainly are the same sort of days, the observation of which the apostle here complains of, and consequently condemns.

By *elements* the apostle means the first rudiments or principles by which the people are taught or led to instruction of any kind; such as the letters of the alphabet, by which children are taught to read, and by that means gradually led to learning and knowledge of different kinds; and so far elements have their use, and are indeed necessary: but what would you think of a man who, being fully instructed in any art or science, instead of putting it in practice, and continually improving in it, should content himself with going back now and then to his primmer, and reading over his a, b, c? Would not these elements be to such a man *weak* and *beggarly* indeed? For what would he then learn from them, or what better or wiser would he be for them.

Just such elements as these in another respect are holidays: the Jews, when Almighty God first called them out of Egypt, were children in true religion, and were to be led to it

like children, by particular ceremonies, which were to continue till they were fully instructed in the grand dispensation of God's providence, or in the end of their miraculous separation from the rest of the world; when this happened, which it did when our Saviour made his appearance upon earth, then these *childish things* were to be *put away;* men were no longer to worship and honour God by ceremonies or holidays like children, but *in spirit and in truth* like men made perfect in stature and understanding in Christ.

Now if the Jewish holidays were *weak* and *beggarly elements* in respect of the fullness of knowledge in Christ, much more are those of later date; for they want even those advantages which belonged to the Jewish ceremonial: *our* festivals are neither of divine appointment, nor have any promises or rewards annexed to the observation of them; nor are they types and figures of any thing to come, and so can afford no foundation of our faith or hope; in all these they are plainly excelled by those days and times which Mr. Nelson says are abrogated: that is to say, they are *weaker* than these, as being of mere human appointment, and *more beggarly*, as affording nothing towards increasing our faith, or promoting our repentance, which might not be had with more spiritual profit without them. For

2. They bring us into bondage, the bondage of superstition, which is an idle and vain fear of displeasing God by doing something that he has not forbidden, or by omitting something that he has not commanded: reflect now, I intreat you, what a number of silly and childish

customs you practice at this season of Christmas only, customs which I should be ashamed to mention in this place, and yet customs upon which some of you (I speak what I know) firmly believe your prosperity for the rest of the year absolutely depends.

But upon what, I pray, should your prosperity depend but upon the blessing and good providence of God? If therefore Almighty God hath promised his blessing on no such conditions, what are you doing but making bonds and burdens for yourselves? which you would never have thought of, but for the fancied solemnity and sanctification of these days and times. —But

3. A still worse effect of these festivals is, that they defeat and make vain the labours of your ministers among you, which are or should be directed to convince you of the necessity of being holy, and walking in the fear of God, every day and every hour of your lives, and of being the same pious and charitable christians in every state and condition of your sojourning on earth; instead of that, how many of you think that you ought to be more religious at these seasons than at other times? how few of you receive the communion at any other times, but on one of the three great festivals? and which of you does not believe that the preparatory repentance you then exercise, is sufficient for the remaining part of the year?

I appeal to your practice for the matter of fact, and above all other instances of it, to your practice this very day, which (if you cannot justify it by such doctrines and opinions as these)

is not to be defended either before God, or those who have the rule over you upon earth.

And if you desire to know the tendency of these doctrines and opinions, be pleased once more to reflect what liberties you think yourselves authorized to take, as soon as the devotional part of your service is performed; such liberties as the apostle Peter ranks with no better company than that of *abominable idolaters.* 1 Ep. iv. 3.

Some person, perhaps, may here demand, "what have these things to do with the public "and religious solemnity of the season? the "church gives no encouragement to these su- "perstitions, immoralities and false opinions, "nor says one word to that effect in any of her "canons or rubrics:" very true; but neither does the church say one word to discourage them; and I will venture to say that if the church had not provided particular offices for these seasons, the church's people would not have practised these fooleries.

The least that might have been expected from a protestant church is that she should have borne her testimony openly and publicly against these corruptions of true religion: more indeed will be requisite to render a church without spot and blemish, namely a godly and effectual discipline, enabling her to separate these putrid excrescences, and all who nourish and countenance them from the sound members of her body; which if our own church had the strength and courage to do, I verily believe, my brethren, you would soon be weary of the rest of the ceremony.

As it is, I own I do not see how we can get

clear of the objection which the dissenters make to our celebration of these festivals, viz. that it is a remnant of popery. I have set myself about it twenty times, but could never find nor make any defence for them but on popish principles, for the ready reception of which in other articles, I have some reason to believe these *beggarly elements* prepare no small numbers of our common people.

I would not therefore have you, my brethren, to imagine that I charge these things upon you, as your own proper and peculiar fault; I am sensible you have been trained up and fixed in them by education, authority, and prejudices, the strength and force of which I very well know, having myself been under the bondage of them for no small part of my life; but then I must add that being thus warned of the mischief they do you, it will now become you to consider the matter seriously and impartially, to examine the scriptures diligently, and to learn from thence *what manner of persons you ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness*, every year, month, and day of your lives: and finally to disengage your minds from every idle conceit for which you have no warrant in the word of God; otherwise the blame as well as the evil consequences of your superstition, must henceforward be upon your own heads.

And here I designed to close this discourse; but whilst I was making so free with your principles and conduct, it came into my mind that I had thereby laid myself under a necessity of giving you some account of my own; for may not you very reasonably and very justly expos-

tulate with me in some such terms as these? —"If these things are so blameable, so unedifying, so unscriptural, so weak and beggarly, and lastly, so obstructive of true religion, how came you, who are our minister, to comply with them, to go before us, and to minister to us in them? If your arguments have any force, they will prove that it is wrong to celebrate the nativity of our Lord on any day as well as this: are you therefore without blame who have joined with us so long in these services without letting us know your mind, even whilst you were persuaded that they had a tendency to render ineffectual the rest of your labours among us?"

To this cutting remonstrance I must in part plead guilty: I can by no means acquit myself of all blame in this matter; though how much blame I ought to take to myself I cannot determine. I will therefore lay a plain and true state of the case before you, and you shall judge for me: but first I must enlarge my confession a little, and charge myself with some other particulars.

Be pleased then to know, that besides these festivals concerning which you have heard so much of my opinion, there are many other things in the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the church of England, which are very exceptionable, not to say grievous to me, and other clergymen with whom I have conversed, and which, as we have reason to believe, are far from being agreeable to many serious, considerate, and conscientious ministers who do not chuse to speak their minds so freely about them.

Three or four years ago some sensible and pious men (supposed to be of the clergy, but to me hitherto unknown) collected together and published an account of many of these exceptionable articles, suggesting, in a very modest and humble address to our temporal and ecclesiastical governors, the expedience there was that they should be examined, and, if necessary, amended; and either the same gentlemen or some others who think as they do, have seconded these *disquisitions* in many small but unanswerable tracts to the same effect.

This hopeful attempt gave me and some of my particular friends a prospect of speedy relief, as we did not doubt but our governors would immediately take a matter of this importance into consideration, and make such seasonable alterations in the frame of our church, as the nature of the case, the interest of the protestant religion, and the edification of our people seem to require, and such as they are fully impowered to make, both by the laws of God and of this realm.

Now whilst we had any good hope that such measures would take place, it would neither have been prudent nor decent, nor christian-like, to express our uneasiness or impatience for a remedy which we were likely to have in due time: this I trust will be a sufficient apology for my silence upon these subjects among you hitherto, nor probably should I yet have broke it, had not yourselves compelled me by an act which makes me now fear I have been silent too long.

It is true indeed, the prospect above-mentioned is growing less and less distinct, and the

expectation of a review of our ecclesiastical affairs seems now to be laid aside on all hands; still however it becomes us inferiors to presume that they who have the power to act on such occasions, and in such affairs, and particularly my lords the bishops, whose more immediate concern it seems to be, have very solid and satisfactory reasons for letting it alone.

But solid and satisfactory as these reasons may be to those who are determined by them, they afford no relief to us who know them not, nor can so much as guess at them, and who are still labouring under an irksome obligation, which we neither know how to remove, nor are well able to bear.

To the farther question then, which I apprehend you may ask me, viz. "Why, being con-" vinced as above, I still chuse to acquiesce in " these uneasy circumstances?" I am going to answer for myself, but by no means for any man else, who may, in a different situation, have a great deal more to say for himself than I have in mine.

First then it will be no wonder to you who are acquainted with my circumstances, and are no strangers to the compassion which a well-natured man must have for a wife and children, if some little secularity mix in the considerations that retain me in the ministry: I may truly say with the steward in the gospel, *I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed.*—But these should be, in such cases as this, the least and lowest of all considerations.

In the next place, my age and infirmities are such, that I cannot hope to be long very useful in this or in any other way: I am, and

have been now for almost twenty years, well known to you all; and by a variety of kindness you have shewn to me and mine, am made very sensible that I have a great share of your good will; which may prolong my usefulness among you, some time beyond its period in any other situation; and this will spare me much study and many anxieties which, at my time of life, a man much better qualified must undergo to accommodate himself to the duties of a new occupation: and I should be both unworthy and ungrateful if I refused to bear a good deal of heart-ake for your sakes, whose spiritual welfare should be more to me than any other consideration in the world.

A third reason I have for abiding with you, and continuing to minister among you in some things which I cannot approve, is the reverence and affection I bear to the church of England, in which I first learned the principles of the christian religion, and whose blemishes I for my part would never disclose, however grievous they might be to myself, if they could be concealed consistently with the superior obligations I have to truth, and the testimony of a good conscience. Besides, there is in the principles of the English reformation, avowed by the glorious martyrs and confessors of king Henry the VIIIth's and Queen Mary's days, a noble foundation for the union of all reasonable and sincere christians; to which, I trust in God, recourse will at some time be had, when men's prejudices are so far subsided, that they can, without reluctance, adopt the principle without adhering to practices, into which our first reformers were evidently compelled;

with a pardonable view indeed of gaining those who, we now find by long experience, are not *so* to be gained; and who are much more likely to gain us by the dextrous use they make of our abiding by that temporary compliance on grounds and reasons which have so very much the air and features of their own.

In the mean time it is out of all doubt with me, that there is a wise, a just, and merciful providence of God concerned in the continuance of our present system, inconvenient and unedifying as it may be. Who knows when protestants are disposed to return to their *first love* without reserve, and the hour of an effectual reformation is at hand, but the least justifiable circumstances of our own church-polity may become the means of spreading the truth farther, and driving it deeper than it would otherwise have gone? The use the papists have made of some of these circumstances, to shew how slight and insignificant the transition is from the English to the Romish church, is well known to many, and, in some instances to myself; may not we hope that the danger arising from the great numbers said to be thus seduced, will at length alarm our civil governors at least, and determine them to root up every thing which has the least affinity to that horrid superstition (the prey of whose all devouring jaws is nothing less than the peace, the liberty, the virtue, and the happiness of all mankind) and to raise a new and beautiful superstructure on the simple, but sure and firm *foundation of the apostles and prophets,* JESUS CHRIST *himself being the chief corner stone?*

The last reason I have to give for a submis-

sive acquiescence in my present situation, is that the hand of ecclesiastical power is happily kept back from all extreme severity, by which a way is often left open to the diligent and conscientious minister of edifying his people by methods and expedients, which were utterly impracticable, when the iron rod of canonical correction was in the hands of some great churchman of former times.

How consistent it is that these laws should still remain contrasted as they are by this relaxation of their force, I enquire not; that their force is relaxed, is a public blessing which we owe to the integrity and moderation of one of the best of princes, for whose life and welfare I daily offer up my most earnest prayers, under whom I have lived for so great a part of my life in peace and prosperity, to whom I have most willingly pledged the allegiance of a faithful and peaceable subject, and whom I am inclined to obey in gratitude, as well as bound to it for conscience sake.

True it is, the remonstrances, or even the defection of twenty such inconsiderable men as I am from the church of England, could hardly occasion any material disturbance either in church or state; some offence however, might arise from the latter, to which, *if it is possible*, I will never be accessary: which I would be understood to declare with a saving to myself of the privilege of joining my brethren who are likeminded in any humble and dutiful representation of our circumstances to the higher powers, whenever a suitable opportunity, and reasonable hopes of being heard shall invite us: and should that ever happen in this our day,

you must not think much, my beloved friends and brethren, if this day's instance of your mistaken superstition, which has operated (innocently I hope on your part) against a plain and most reasonable law of your country, should be alledged as one motive for cutting off all future occasions of the like, and for substituting in the place of those cold and formal observances, some other means of public devotion and edification, which may more effectually inlighten your understandings, dispose your hearts, and direct and encourage you in the practice of true christian piety, charity and holiness, every day and hour of your lives: —which God of his great mercy speedily grant for the sake of our blessed Redeemer JESUS CHRIST, *Amen.*

A

STORY

OF

TWO JEWS

AND THE

CATACOMBS.

Said to be translated from the French.

[FIRST PRINTED, MDCCCI.]

A

STORY OF

TWO JEWS.

THERE were two Jews, who, about one and the same time had so far overcome the prejudices of their education, as to determine with themselves to make an impartial examination where true religion was to be found; and particularly whether it might not be among the christians. They had disposed their minds to receive and embrace the truth wherever they should find it, and to inform themselves by all the means in their power, who, among all the pretenders to it were in the right. The name of one of these Jews was *Joseph*, of the other *Benjamin*.

Joseph lived in *Holland*, a country where christians are divided into a great many sects, roman catholics, calvinists, lutherans, greeks, anabaptists, &c. and he had consequently an opportunity to make a thorough examination, and to determine for the truth wherever he should find it.

Benjamin had not the opportunity to make the same examination. In the place where he lived, which was at *Avignon*, they allowed

only of one sect of christians, i. e. papists. His situation therefore appeared to be much less advantageous for his purpose, than that of Joseph. After having examined on all sides the doctrine and conduct of these christians, who were all of one sort, he was farther from his point than ever; and he concluded, that if the christians with whom he was not acquainted, were not of more value than these, the truth was not among christians at all. However he suspended his judgment, and proposed to travel in order to inform himself of the foundation of things.

In the mean time, *Joseph*, without going out of his own country examined into all the different sects of christians, and for this purpose, addressed himself to the doctors of each sect successively.

He found these gentlemen much more zealous to set off the excellence of their own sect above that of others, than to make known the excellence of the christian religion in general: and that which embarrassed him the most was, that every sect boasted to be the depository of pure, unadulterated truth, to the exclusion of all others.

He found in the doctors of each sect, a partial, dogmatical, and passionate spirit against all the other parties: those of the infallible sect above all others, gave him the greater disgust in proportion to the efforts they made to bring him over to their side.

From the ecclesiastics he went to the layity or seculars; he found their spirits tinctured and cloathed with the same prejudices as those of the doctors; people among whom religion

had no place but in the memory, or in certain outward demonstrations to which they gave the name of *worship*, and to whom *conscience* was not known in the least, except by name, and the advantages they had learned to draw from the conscience of other people, [by appealing to that when they thought themselves injured, and the like.]

Behold poor *Joseph* daily more and more confounded. The principles of right reason which he entertained in his own breast, made him perceive among these nominal christians, a sort of falsehood, to which he had the greater aversion, the more he became acquainted with them.

He resolved, however, not to give over: he suffered himself to suppose that the religion of christians was different from their practice: what embarrassed him was, the division and opposition of the several parties.

From the seculars he returned to the doctors; he proposed to them an expedient to clear up the truth to him to the bottom: and that was to agree among themselves what it was that constituted the essential part of religion; to shew him this simply and precisely, without requiring him to qualify himself with the name of any sect or party, rather than another, or to incumber himself with particular opinions.

The proposition is found reasonable, and a day is appointed for this; the doctors of each sect chuse such from among themselves, as they esteemed most able for the purpose, and of these a kind of synod is formed. The Jew did not desire to be admitted into it: he was con-

tented to learn the result; let us now see how things passed in this assembly.

At first there was great civility and politeness among the doctors. They promised mutually to give up every one for his own party, any thing to the common interests of christianity: the point at issue was not the conversion of a single Jew, but of an infinite number of others, whom the example of this might bring over; and this was enough to engage them to make their utmost efforts.

They began with discussing the fundamental points, or the articles of the creed; concerning which they found no difficulty to agree: they agreed likewise that the scriptures were of divine authority.

Hitherto they are uniform, and somebody proposed upon this, whether they ought not to stop here, and present the Jew with the christian religion in this simple, and at the same time large plan; without embarrassing him with those particular senses, which each party pretends to find in these divine scriptures.

This proposal is unanimously hissed off the stage. The thing, according to them, is impracticable, and subject to a thousand inconveniences. What sort of a christian, after all, must he be, who should not be determined before hand by some teachers or doctors, concerning the true sense of scripture, and who should content himself with being a christian in general, without ranging himself in any religion in particular, and consequently without joining in or performing any public acts of it? A christian of this sort would be a man without religion: and who knows not how pernici-

ous a thing it is to be indifferent to all religions or sects.

Whence they concluded, with one common accord, that the Jew in embracing christianity, should embrace also some particular religion, and that he ought to range himself on one side or another; in one word, that he ought to be of some *one* religion.

You see they are yet uniform, and there remains only one single point for them to disembroil and decide, and that is, which of these religions is the true one, which of them is the properest to conduct a man to salvation. In one word, which of them is most conformable to the gospel and the apostolical doctrine.

This is the difficult point; the more pains they take to disembroil it, the more they are in confusion: after five or six hours discussion of this single point, every one finds himself just where he set out; every one pretends that his own religion alone, is free from error, and is the only one wherein evangelical truth is taught in all its purity.

Joseph, during this interval, grows impatient to learn what conclusion the doctors have come to. He introduces himself into the assembly. They tell him how things have passed; that they are in perfect agreement upon all points, except this last, namely, concerning the party he ought to espouse; that it is upon this article *only*, that their sentiments are divided. Upon this the leading men of each party, one after another, enter upon a formal defence of their own sect: every one maintains that his own only deserves the name of religi-

on, that all the others are only sects, where the truth is either falsified or mistaken.

These different and opposite discourses, render poor Joseph insensible: he keeps silence a while, and he recollects what he had read in the history of Moses, concerning the tower of Babel, and the confusion of the language of the builders. This silence makes the doctors of each sect hope, that Joseph will determine for *his:* and every one is impatient to hear him pronounce sentence in his favour.

At length Joseph determines. He cuts the gordian knot, declaring, "that he will suspend his design of becoming a christian, till there is an end of this confusion of languages among them, and principally among their leaders; that truth being ONE, cannot be different from itself: that if christians are really the people of God, one ought to expect that sooner or later he will raise them up guides, who shall not oppose one another in this manner: that the conduct of Almighty God, with respect to the ancient Israelites, is a proof of this: that as soon as he shall find the way made plain, and these guides agreed to march the first therein themselves, he will willingly follow them, seeing there is nothing which keeps him at a distance from christianity, but the division which he sees among christians."

Upon this Joseph retires, without staying for any farther reply; and never happening to meet with christians of any other sort than these, to the day of his death, he kept the name of Jew; and under this appearance, so despicable in the eyes of nominal christians, he concealed the interiour of a true christian, namely,

that disposition which makes the essential part of that religion.

We left *Benjamin* in the midst of his design to travel, in order to make himself acquainted with the different sects of christians. He now actually began his journey, and passed through a great many towns, academies, and universities.

He immediately remarked in general, that all christians of whatever sect they may be, are perfectly uniform in one point. This point is the love of riches, and an insatiable desire to heep them up. In this article he finds them more Jews than the Jews themselves.

Benjamin was astonished above measure, to see men, who acknowledged for their king one Jesus of Nazareth, the son of a carpenter, a poor and abject man, continually restless and anxious to exalt and enrich themselves; in one word, to be the very reverse of this their great example, in this world.

He found in general the same spirit had spread itself among the ecclesiastics of whatever sect they were: in this respect, they were just as much the reverse of those fishermen, called apostles, as common christians were of Jesus.

He asked himself why these men, so uniform at the bottom, and whose inclinations are precisely the same, should divide and quarrel about opinions, in which there was no difference, or none considerable, except in imagination. He is tempted to tell them, that they are better friends than they think they are: that instead of being divided into *many* sects or religions, they are all of the *same*. They have only *one*.

What is remarkable in the case, is that they are of this religion from the bottom of their hearts. They perform no acts of it with grimace, or by way of acquittal, for past transgressions. This religion has an universal influence upon all their sentiments and their whole conduct, even while they do not think of it. They fulfil its precepts, without making any reflection that they are doing so.

Benjamin having this idea of the power, which religion ought to have over the whole man, could not find among christians in general any more than one only religion; the same which equally governs all men of corrupt minds, whether they are Pagans, Jews, or Mahometans; and which is no other at the bottom than "the "idolatrous love of SELF, divided into as many "branches as men have passions and vicious "inclinations."

Benjamin was not in search of any such religion as this among christians; he was looking for CHRISTIANITY, and where else should he seek for *that?* What is this thing called CHRISTIANITY, says he to himself, and where is it to be found? Is it only in the gospels, and in the memories of christians.

Upon this he proposes once more to consult the most celebrated of their doctors. He addresses himself successively to several of them, and those of different sects. Each of them in particular painted out christianity to him in the most amiable colours, and under the most beautiful idea. Benjamin tells them, that at this rate, and upon this foot, there are no christians at all. One of them acknowledged that it was too true. Pray then, says the Jew, to whom

do you preach? To christians in appearance, replies the doctor, but for the most part to Pagans in effect.

Hence Benjamin concluded, that it was better for him to remain a Jew, with righteousness and the fear of God in his heart, than to enter into a society where every one puts on a disguise, that he may appear to be what he is not, and that he may not appear to be what he really is.

And now he is resolved to return into his own country: he has nothing more to look for among christians. He hath run through all the different sects of them. He hath consulted the most celebrated of their authors. He hath found nothing among them that is righteous, nothing that is simple and pure. This is a sufficient reason for him to reject their religion.

He sets out therefore on his road home; he meets in an inn with a company of christians, who enter into discourse with him on the subject of religion. One only of the whole company keeps silence. Benjamin looks at him attentively; and finds something in his countenance which is very agreeable; he quits the others, and addresses himself to this man.

He demands of him, whether he is not a christian, and wherefore he had not laid out his endeavours to convert him as the others had done? It is, says the man, because I am thinking to become a christian myself. Then you were not born a christian, says Benjamin? I was born of parents who were called christians, replies the man, (whom we will call SINCERE) but this *only* does not make a man a christian,

there ought to be quite other sort of ingredients.

Benjamin surprised at this answer, in order to prevail with the man to discover more of his mind, asks him of what religion, or of what sect he was? SINCERE answers him, that his only aim was to become a true christian without embarrassing himself by taking part with any particular sect: "That their divisions and "oppositions marked them for sects, and not "religions; seeing that true religion is but "ONE and cannot be divided."

Benjamin, still more and more astonished to meet with a christian of this sort, asks him, if it was possible that a Jew might become a christian without naming himself by the title of any sect, and taking the part of that sect against all others? To which SINCERE answers, that if it was possible to be a christian heretofore, before the introduction of these sects, it is likewise still possible to be a christian, without taking part with any of them. That one ought not to judge of christianity by the habits in which the several sects disguise themselves; that it is of itself perfectly simple, and by that circumstance perfectly independent of those particular opinions, within which, men pretend to confine it.

That christianity, in the substantial part of it, is only the religion of Abraham and David renewed by Jesus Christ. A religion of which the basis is the rectitude of the will, and obedience to conscience: and of which all the precepts are reducible to a sincere devoting of the creature to the Creator; a *devoting* which comprehends all those sacrifices, to which the true

children of Abraham may have been called, in order to prove the strength of their faith, and the sincerity of their love.

Benjamin, the rectitude of whose heart had prepared the way for the reception of all the truths that could be offered to him, perceived the whole force of these at once. He protested to SINCERE, that the veil was taken away from before his eyes, and that if he had been made to contemplate christianity sooner under this form, he should have been a christian long ago.

They entered afterwards into farther conversation concerning the life of Jesus, his miracles, and the design of his death, which, for the present, I forbear to mention; I will only add, that Benjamin having already by the rectitude of his will, that disposition which is essential to a true christian, found no difficulty in becoming such in all respects; and, by continuing in the same disposition, to deliver himself from all those persecutions which the false Jews might raise against him.

One may see by this example, how different circumstances may concur, to set the same truths in a different light to persons who are equally righteous at the bottom.

Behold our two Jews, disposed in one and the same degree of rectitude and fidelity, to obey their consciences. By this rectitude of the will, one of them is led to the distinct knowledge of evangelical truths. The other remains in obscurity in this respect; but such an obscurity as will not render him culpable, as it proceeds from foreign causes, in which his will hath no part. Had he found himself in the

same circumstances with Benjamin, he would have been a christian upon the same footing.

We may conclude from hence, that one of them is not less the servant of God, than the other, although they had different titles, and that he is neither a Jew nor a christian, who is such outwardly only.

THE CATACOMBS.

[From the French.]

A CERTAIN author, who was a necromancer, has left us in his memoirs the following relation.

Between Arabia and the southern extremity of the Persic gulf, there is a subterraneous country of immense extent, to which they have given the name of THE CATACOMBS.

The inhabitants of this country, are all of them born with very weak eyes, and are very awkwardly made in other respects. The darkness of the country is agreeable to them every way. They cannot bear the light without being sensible of extreme pain. It is however reported, that the sun has one very different property in this country, from what it has in our regions, and that is the property of curing insensibly, all the indispositions to which the pupil of the eye is liable: and that they who have the courage to expose themselves to the heat of it, and to endure the pain it causes at the beginning, become by degrees accustomed to it, and have no longer any thing to fear from it.

It is likewise said, that they whom the light hath pierced the most directly, and by this

means hath cured the most perfectly, come to love it so well, that they cannot live without it.

I return to the Catacombs. This country, though it lies in an obscurity, little less than that of the night, is not entirely inaccessible to certain rays of light. The inhabitants may let in more or less of the light, by certain small wickets or trap doors, which it depends upon themselves to open or to shut. The wickets are fixed in certain openings made in the rock, on purpose to afford some passage for the day-light.

Besides these openings, by which the light is let in through these little wickets, there are likewise here and there little paths or tracks, by which the light penetrates obliquely in different directions. These paths are of a winding nature, and always lead upwards, being filled with the stones of the rock, each of which serves for a step or a stair.

The higher one mounts, the more he discovers of the day-light; the light becomes still less and less indirect; and he begins to perceive something of the heat of the sun, in proportion as he is enlightened by it.

These paths which contain many miles of road, lead you in descending, into the country of darkness, or the kingdom of the Catacombs: and, in ascending, they have at length their termination in the country of day. In a vast extent of pure light, which has no limits.

The inhabitants of the dark country may, by the means of these paths, have some communication with the inhabitants of the enlightened country: and they might, if they would, by the same means be introduced into

it. As likewise the inhabitants of the day-light may reciprocally descend into the land of darkness.

It appears by the memoirs which historians have left us upon this subject, that these several inhabitants have little inclination to pass from one of these countries to the other: and that the greater part of them have a strong aversion to the attempt, which they cannot prevail with themselves to overcome. Let us now see what may be the cause of this aversion.

To begin with those of the dark country: It is easy to comprehend that the indisposition they labour under, with respect to the light, by reason of the pain they feel from it, is one of the principal causes of this. On another hand, they are born in this country; they are furnished in it not only with things necessary to sustain life, but with every thing that can make it agreeable: the darkness which prevails in it, far from being troublesome, is a comfort to them: they have the secret of making lamps, the light of which does not make them suffer, as they do from the lustre of the sun; it is by the light of these lamps, that they discern objects, and perform an infinite variety of work.

The people of the place are very laborious; they have invented manufactures of all sorts, suitable to the occasions of the inhabitants; and they supply by art what is wanting on the side of nature.

As their eye-sight is one of their immediate weaknesses, and is also one of the most essential, a great part of their manufacturers are employed in procuring for every one some relief in this respect. This relief consists in an al-

most infinite diversity of spectacles of all sorts: these spectacles are so artificially contrived, that they do not appear to be spectacles like those which are made in Europe. Some are made to enlarge objects; others to bring them nearer; they have some glasses deeply tinctured with a certain colour, which serve to give the same colour to the object; others are proper to embellish, conceal, or at least to extenuate all deformities.

Besides these different properties, these glasses have one more which is peculiar to them: and that is, that they serve for mirrours to him who makes use of them; by which means it is easy for him to see himself in the light that pleases him best, and to lend himself such colours as may embellish him to the best advantage; but then the mischief is, that other persons who have the same secret, oftentimes despoil him of these borrowed colours, and penetrate into all his deformity, by the oblique direction of their own mirrours.

As for the inhabitants of the regions of light, it is not at all surprising that they cannot resolve to descend into the dark country; it has cost them too much to get out of it; having toiled and endured, in their long and painful marches, all the anguish that the heat and brightness of the sun must occasion, in weak and ill disposed eyes: they are at length become accustomed to the light, and rejoice in its salutary effects, as in their true element. By the same light they discern with a single cast of their eye, both persons and things. Henceforward the assistance of spectacles is become useless to them; on the contrary they obstruct

their sight, or at least prevent their seeing things as they are: and they have no longer any inclination to see any thing in disguise. They have likewise lost their taste for borrowing colours to embellish themselves, either in their own eyes or in the eyes of others. The light, which by a particular property it has in that country, serves these men also for a mirrour, discovers to them distinctly whatever is yet defective in themselves; and they are well contented to see themselves imperfect, and to be so seen by others at the same time.

Can one be surprised after this, that the dark country upon this very account, that the manner of living there is so different, should be insupportable? To say nothing of the suffocating air, which is breathed in the lower regions; a sort of air which nothing will purify, being too much infected with the exhalations of the bodies which are inclosed in it. This air, compared to that which the inhabitants of the light breathe, should rather be accounted a fog, more likely to obstruct respiration, than an atmosphere in which one may breathe freely and with ease.

We find in the Memoirs of . . . . . that a young African, whom a *Genie* took under his conduct, in order to shew him the several curiosities of the world, was carried through the two different countries successively.—Here follows the narrative of the young African himself; save only that I pass by the account he gives of the situation of these countries, that I may sooner come to the historical part.

"The Genie which took upon himself to be my instructor, after having shewn me the differ-

ent situation of these two kingdoms, and the paths which led from one to the other, made me remark the different manners of the inhabitants, and related to me several pieces of history concerning them, which he said were worthy of credit.

"These two people, says he to me, have one and the same original; and it is reported, that at the first they were all placed in the country of light, and were very generously treated by the king of the country; but an accident having happened, which vitiated the pupil of their eyes, and at the same time rendered them deformed in other respects, they found themselves obliged to hide themselves from the light, and to make themselves a retreat in these catacombs; where having found an asylum convenient for their indisposition, they have continued still to dwell there, and to follow the several manufactures which are found among them at this day.

"I demanded then of my Genie, whence the men came, who, at this time, inhabit the enlightened country?

"They are such, says he, as have departed out of the country of the Catacombs, upon the repeated invitations of the king of light. It is reported that this same king being touched with compassion for this distempered people, hath never ceased to invite them to return into his kingdom; and that for this purpose he caused the paths to be opened, and the stairs to be built, which lead insensibly from one of these countries to the other: that he hath time after time sent messengers to them, authorised by his letters patents, to assure them that the light they

are so much afraid of, is the only remedy to cure them; and he appealed to the testimony of these same messengers, who, being taken from among themselves, have had the courage to expose themselves to the heat of the sun; and by that means are in a condition to be no longer afraid of it.

" The history relates, that these messengers have been received more or less favourably, according to the different periods of time, at which they appeared; that a great number of them have been ill received, and even persecuted by the men of their own times, not as messengers of the king, but under the notion that they were impostors; that notwithstanding this, their letters patents have been inrolled in the public annals; and that after the death of these messengers, both they and their letters have been held in high veneration; that they have been reinvested with their title of messengers of the king, and their letters styled, royal patents.

" But farther than this; inasmuch as these letters come from the kingdom of light, and have no other tendency than to bear testimony to it, they have insensibly given them that title; that is to say, they have called them by the name of *light:* and hence the term *light* is become common and familiar among the inhabitants of the dark country; as also the name of the king of light hath at all times been honoured by them; and as they have always professed themselves his subjects, every one will be furnished with these letters of light, every one boasts himself to be of the same party with

it; the name also of the king is echoed through every part of the country.

"What is singularly remarkable in all this, is that this same king having sent from time to time other messengers furnished with letters patents, like the first, they were despised just as their predecessors had been, and still worse treated than they. One fact which appears very disagreeable is, that the son of the king, having come among them in person to confirm the testimony of his messengers, has been taken for a greater impostor than any of them, and actually put to death under that notion.

"Seized with astonishment at an event so incredible, I demanded of my Genie, if the king's son was not furnished with letters patents, proper to make him be acknowledged by his subjects.

"He was furnished, answered he, with many most authentic testimonies, over and above the evidence which the first letters patents had given of him. Were not these first letters consulted, replied I? They were consulted returned the Genie, and it was these same letters, as they believed that authorized them to reject him.

"Some difference in point of form, which they found between the first letters, and those which the king's son brought with him, was sufficient for a pretence to disown him. It was indeed no more than a pretence; for at the bottom it was only the aversion they had to the light, to which the prince opened the passage more than all the messengers before him had ever done. On another hand, the testimony he bore to the light, engaged a number of the inhabitants to travel in these little paths; the

fashion of using spectacles began to fall into discredit; several ventured to open the little wickets, as well to use themselves to the impressions of the light, as by it to discern the objects before them.

"The wickets being thus opened in several quarters, let in too much day-light into the country; besides the pain which their eyes suffered on this occasion, they discovered deformities, which had hitherto been concealed. It became necessary therefore, to find an immediate remedy for an evil which might have consequences so pernicious; in one word, which might possibly in the event dispeople the realm of Catacombs; and this was what suggested to them the prudent measure of cutting off not only the prince himself, but such also of his messengers as came after him, and bore the same testimony.

"Behold a new epoch! A little while after the death of the prince, he is acknowledged for the son of the king; the act of those who put him to death is looked upon with horror; they inroll his history, and also that of his servants, and the testimonies which they had borne of him. Their writings are esteemed as even more authentic than those of the first messengers."

"I then asked the Genie, if these last testimonies which were given to the light, had engaged any great number of the inhabitants to travel along these little paths."

"Some of them, answered he, run to them with eagerness immediately after the death of the prince; but means were presently found to

barricade the avenues to them, and to cause this road to be deserted.

"They began with intimidating the people, by the cruelties they exercised upon those who took that road; but perceiving that by this means they increased the desire that men had to go and join the prince in the region of light, they have fallen upon a gentler method; by which they have succeeded better in their design of detaining men in the kingdom of Catacombs.

"This method is to prove to them, that this country makes a part of the kingdom of light; that it is truly and effectually enlightened, as is evident by the letters of light which they have in their hands, and which are received as the only rule for the conduct of all the inhabitants. To facilitate the reading of these letters, and to relieve the infirmity of their eyesight, a new sort of spectacles have been invented, of a still more delicate workmanship than the first sort; different kinds of these are distributed among the people, who, by the help of them, daily make new discoveries in the letters, or the book of light, and become more and more illuminated every day.

"The misfortune is, that as these spectacles give different colours to the same objects, and also different forms, according as every one manages them, so they find by these means as many contrarieties in the book of light, as they have spectacles among them proper to exhibit things in a contrary manner. Some have seen white, where others saw black; some see things like mountains, which appear to others only as grains of sand; but every one sees as clear as

the day, the very way that he himself would chuse and desire. Division is by this means introduced, and propagated among the inhabitants of the same kingdom; among those who agree to receive the same book, as the light, and who were qualifying themselves by it to become the children of light.

"Henceforward they are separated one from another, and distinguish themselves from each other, by different liveries, and different surnames; but not one of these opposite parties will suffer itself to be disseized of the title of friend and follower of the light; at the same time that each party accuses the rest of being sectaries or partisans of the kingdom of darkness.

"As the followers of each party, look at objects through the spectacles which his own sect has manufactured, every one charges the spectacles which are made elsewhere with disfiguring objects; with representing them black, where they are really white; and every one is ready and willing to lend his neighbour the spectacles he uses himself, as the only true ones, and which only represent things as they really are."

"I asked my Genie, if this had been the case for any long time?"

"The foundation of it, says he, was laid more than sixteen hundred years ago; it is true this division did not immediately appear in public; but for the beginnings of it, one might even go higher still."

"Is any one accused, said I, of being the author of this division?"

"There are some people, answered he, who ascribe it to the politics of the prince of the Catacombs; who makes this disturbance, as they pretend, without appearing in it. It is believed that he designs by this means to keep his subjects within his kingdom; and, by amusing them with these disputes, to make them forget the little paths which would lead them directly into the kingdom of light. It is suspected likewise, that this same prince, had a chief hand in the sudden malady with which the first inhabitants of the inlightened country were seized; and that by his cunning, he thus drew them into his own empire. At least this is related for fact, in that book which gives testimony to the light.

"Be that as it will, the politics ascribed to this prince, so far as relates to the circumstance of division, have had their effect. Each party, in arrogating to itself the title of friend to the light, no longer thinks of quitting the country. Each believes himself to be situated to great advantage in this place; and if he has had any idea of a more luminous country than this where he resides, he immediately suggests to himself, that it is only for another life that this light is reserved; that it is a rash undertaking to pretend to travel towards it while one is in the body; in bodies so indisposed, with respect to the light, that it cannot be faced without causing amazing pains; that without this light there is day enough in the kingdom of the Catacombs, and that one may establish himself there very commodiously in all respects, and meet with all sorts of agreeable entertainment;

after which, upon leaving the body, one may be finally introduced into the kingdom of light.

" Behold *one* point in which all parties, the most opposite in other respects, are generally agreed. For the rest, the process still subsists and goes on, and the division even increases; and they will needs say, that besides the opposition which reigns between one sect and another; every sect has, within itself, numbers of individuals, who are not at all better agreed one among another."

" I then demanded of my Genie, if among all the inhabitants of this kingdom, there were none that attempted a re-union?"

" None at all, says he, except they are those who dare attempt to travel along the little paths which end in the kingdom of light.—How comes it to pass, said I, that the opposition between the different parties should be reconciled this way?"

"I will tell you, answered he, how this comes about. Whatever the distance may be between one of these paths, and another at the entering upon them, it is found, that in ascending them, they approach nearer and nearer to each other. It is perceived likewise, that in several places, many of these paths end together, and are all reduced to one; by which means men come to be re-united, who at their first setting out were at a very considerable distance one from another.

" That which farther contributes, added he, to re-unite them, is that accordingly as they approach nearer the light, and their eyes become more able to bear it, they are all enlightened by the same day. The diversity of spec-

tacles, which causes the division in the country of the Catacombs, having no longer any effect here, all occasion of contention is now taken away: and as it is by the same light, that all of them now see the objects before them, they do not differ at all in the judgment they make of them.

"It is said likewise, that though there may be among them a little variety in their manner of looking at things, this does not divide them at all. They make it their capital point to march on, and advance towards the light, rather than to stay and contemplate the objects they meet with in the way."

"I next demanded of the Genie, what may be the reason that these little paths are so difficult to travel in; and why so very few people dare attempt it."

"The truth is, says he, one ought to have a great deal of courage for this enterprize; on the one side to get above regarding all that the inhabitants of the country may say or think of you, in whose opinion such sort of journies are not only superfluous, but even dangerous; on another side, to endure all the pain which the impression of the light may cause in weak eyes, not to mention the length of the way, and the rocks and stones that are found in it."

"Are the difficulties in this route, said I, equal to all sorts of adventurers, or are they more easily surmounted by some than by others?"

"The difficulties vary infinitely, answered he, according to the disposition, the age and spirit of the traveller. The first step, which is generally the most difficult, costs some infinitely more than others.—I desired to know the

reason of this, and who they were to whom it cost the most?"

"To those, replied he, whose indisposition is become inveterate through age, and to whom for that reason, the pains caused by the light are most piercing. Another thing which makes the first step more difficult to such persons is, that they have hitherto all along believed themselves to have been in the regions of light; they have never been sensible of the indisposition of their eye-sight with respect to it; and upon this account it is necessary they should be disabused, before they can resolve upon their first march. It is just at this point, that a number of people stop short: not being able to suffer themselves to be disabused in this capital mistake.

"Young people, on the other hand, have less trouble in making this first step, as well because their indisposition with respect to the light is less confirmed, as because they do not pretend to be so clear-sighted as others. There are indeed, continues he, exceptions to be made among all sorts; every age has obstacles to surmount, which are proper and particular to itself; and in every age it is the *will* which decides the grand point. However, it is true that all things considered, young people have the advantage; and among the young people, those who with a due degree of true courage, have the least presumption that they are already sufficiently enlightened."

"How comes it to pass, said I to my Genie, that there should be any among those people who already believe themselves to be in the country of light, that should ever think of

departing out of it, or of looking out for another?"

"This commonly happens, says he to me, when in reading the book which testifies of the light, any of them open the little wickets, by way of getting a little more day-light; on these occasions they discover that this sort of light is very different from that of the Catacombs; they find likewise that the book to which they give the title of *the Light*, was only composed to give evidence of the light, and to send men into the realm of light, where it is to be seen in the brightness of it's full lustre. The same book likewise points out to them the little paths, as the road by which others have arrived in the enlightened region. After which they are at liberty to determine whether they will take this road, or remain in the dark country; if they resolve upon the latter, they are obliged to shut in the wickets to prevent being hurt by the rays of light which are insupportable to their eyes; for it is to be observed, that the rays of light which have their passage through the wickets, cause much greater sufferings than the light which shines in the little paths."

"But is it not, said I, the same light which is the origin of both? . . . . . It is the same, answered he; but as the inlets through the wickets are narrower than through the paths, and as it darts with vehemence upon people who stay in one place, it strikes them much more painfully than it does others, whom it shines upon in the paths, and who keep going on without stopping any where."

"I then demanded of my Genie, how those who knew nothing of the book which testifies

of the light, can without this index find out the little paths which lead thither?"

"The rays, says he, which they receive through the little wickets, are those which conduct them in the paths; by this means they begin to have some experience what the light may be: they begin to apprehend that they came originally from a country different from that where they reside; whatever pain they suffer in their eyes at the first, they seldom fail of finding out that it is good for them, and perceive by a certain instinct, that it is a necessary consequence of their origin, and that they have been made for the illuminated country: and they have these perceptions in common with all those who have not increased the indisposition of their eye-sight, by the use of the coloured spectacles.

"Henceforth they set themselves to search, and to try if they cannot find some opening in the country where they are, by which they may travel to the region of this light, and making these trials, by *feeling after* this light, they discover by degrees these little paths, enlightened only by a small glimmering; they try to enter, and from henceforward it depends upon themselves to pursue the road to the end of it: the same light serving them for a guide, and, continually increasing, it depends, I say, upon themselves, provided they are but willing to undergo the fatigues, which are inseparable from the experiment."

"It appears to me, replied I, that they of whom you are speaking, find it easier to resolve upon this progress towards the regions of light, than they who have in their hands the book

that testifies of it. Might not one conclude from hence, that this book is rather hurtful to the latter, than beneficial?"

"It only becomes hurtful, answered he, to those who pervert the use of it; but to others it is infinitely beneficial; it serves them for a continual directory in all the windings they meet with, by the agreement they find between the traverses they make, and the tracks of the prince and his messengers; and thus are they supported and encouraged against all their difficulties and fatigues, which happen by an infinite number of accidents; and they learn from the same book, the happy portion which is at the end of their journey.

"Hence it appears, that they who have this book in their hands, are in a better situation than they who never heard of it; they have at least more ease and encouragement in their progress; and are able by the means of this book, to solve difficulties, which to others are inexplicable.

"As for those to whom the book is become hurtful, they have nobody to blame but themselves: this book sends them to the light, and points out the way; shews them the tracks of the prince himself, and invites them on his part to go and join him. See the great use of this testimony, and consider how they pervert it, and turn it to something just contrary. This happens in that, under pretence of doing the greater honour to this book, they displace it from the rank it holds of a *testimony*, and give it the name of *Light*; and from hence conclude, that the dark country is extremely enlightened, and that the light it enjoys, is more than

sufficient for it, and that it is quite superfluous to seek for more of it elsewhere."

"I demanded once more of my Genie, if the prince of light had never sent any new messengers to rectify this misrepresentation: or whether he gave himself no concern about the inhabitants of the dark country, as he had done heretofore."

"It is pretended, says the Genie, that he interests himself for them at all times equally, but then they add, that any new messengers sent on his part, would be useless, because that they have in their hands the book which contains the testimony of the ancient messengers, and as the prince does nothing in vain, they conclude from hence, that he will never send any more."

"Upon this footing, replied I, if the prince should judge differently concerning what might be profitable or unprofitable; and that he should find it to the purpose to send fresh messengers, would they be taxed as impostors, for this only reason, namely, that the prince would do nothing in vain? . . . . . They would be so treated answered he, if not by all the inhabitants, at least by those who had decided beforehand, that the prince would most certainly send no more messengers."

"But would not the method of examination, said I to him, take place in this article, with a number of the inhabitants?"

"It might be so, said he, but there is room to believe that the different spectacles, through which so many people would look at them, would cause them upon the whole to be rejected."

" I demanded, lastly, of my Genie, what is the final lot of those who obstinately remain in the kingdom of the Catacombs."

" It is, says he, most terrible. After some days of diversion and entertainment, which the prince of the country provides for them by way of allurement, they are removed into another country belonging to the same prince, where they at length experience all torment: but that which tortures them the most, is that their spectacles and false mirrours, having here no longer any force or virtue, they are obliged to behold themselves, and to be seen by others as monsters: they see in one word all that the obscurity of the dark country had hidden from them, and they feel in all their bones the sharpest and most afflicting pains, which a certain numbness (occasioned by the humidity of the dark country) had as it were suspended; not to mention that their eyes which were not able to endure the light, are here doomed to suffer the burning heat of a devouring fire: in fine, the completion of their torment is, that they suffer nothing but what they have chosen themselves, and what they might have avoided.

Here end the memoirs of the AFRICAN.

A

CANDID ADDRESS

TO THE

JEWS,

Residing, or desiring to reside in

GREAT BRITAIN,

OCCASIONED BY THE REPEAL

OF A LATE ACT OF PARLIAMENT

IN THEIR FAVOUR.

The veil which is upon the Scriptures, in respect of the carnal Jews, holds likewise in respect of wicked christians. PASCHAL.

MDCCCII.

A CANDID ADDRESS, &c.

MEN AND BRETHREN,

THE altercation to which your interests and affairs in this country lately gave occasion, seemed so totally to have engaged our people on the one side or on the other, that whereas some sorts of persons in other public contests, have been permitted to look on without listing in either party, in *this* almost every man was obliged to speak his mind. Concerning the Jew-bill it was not reputable to be neuter; and he who had nothing to say for it or against it, was sure to be suspected either of ignorance in the principles, or indifference to the interests of revealed religion.

The event has at length determined the dispute, in favour (as we may presume) of the majority; and as the christian faith has made so considerable a figure in the clamorous part of the debate at least, it will probably be concluded, that this victorious majority consists of the sincerest and truest, as well as the most zealous professors of it.

It is usual for people who lose their cause in our courts of law, to take it for granted, that they have not been fairly and honestly dealt with; and though the most able and upright

judge, and the most impartial jury have passed upon the affair in litigation, yet nothing can silence the complaints of the sufferer; who will have it that the merits of his cause have been overborne by the chicaneries of the law, and the corruption of its managers.

We may well suppose, that you will have some reflexions of this kind, and at this time, with respect to the christian law, to the dictates of which your late defeat is, I find, very generally ascribed. But as it is the same christian law, by which we pretend to direct every word and action of our lives, and as it is, or should be, of great consequence to us, what notions you, who are governed by another law, entertain of this of ours, it is, I think, incumbent upon us, to vindicate the honour of our profession, so far as that it may not suffer in your estimation by any false or injurious representations, which your present resentments may incline you to put upon it.

This is the aim of my present application to you, in behalf of which I humbly intreat your patience and attention, whilst I lay before you what I apprehend to be the true state of the case; and thereby inable you to judge how far any circumstances or obligations of the christian religion, have contributed to your late disappointment.

In order to do this with sufficient perspicuity, it will be necessary to begin with a few considerations on the nature and grounds of that religion which *you* profess, and in what light that religion appears to christians; whence you may the better form your judgment of what it was reasonable for you to expect from us:

and what real occasion you may have to complain, that the event in question has not been answerable to our principles or pretences.

First then, we agree with you in esteeming your law to be divine; and allow that it was given to your forefathers by Almighty God himself. We agree also in receiving every circumstance of your history, recorded in your own scriptures for undoubted truth. We allow that you had a miraculous dispensation for a long course of years; that you were preserved and supported, as well as afflicted and punished by a train of wonderful incidents, unlike to any thing that ever happened to any other people on the face of the earth; and we accept of this, as full and sufficient evidence that you were separated from the idolatrous nations of the world, to be an holy and peculiar people to the great GOD of the universe, who thus *made bare his arm* on your behalf.

But we go still farther with you. We acknowledge that you have had a succession of prophets divinely inspired, who have foretold many future events, respecting, as well your own fate and fortunes, as those of other nations: particularly we believe with you, that these prophets have spoken of a glorious and powerful person, who, under the character of the *Messiah*, should redeem you from all misery and bondage, and restore you to a state of prosperity and triumph.

Many of the incidents of which your prophets make mention, we hold in common with you, to have been punctually brought to pass; and we agree with you likewise, that many things

foretold by them, have not yet been fulfilled; but where the time of the advent of the *Messiah* comes in question, there we part. You affirm that he hath never yet appeared upon earth; whereas we insist, that a certain person named *Jesus*, who was born into the world about seventeen centuries and a half ago, and who lived in your own country of *Judea*, above thirty years, was the very Messiah of whom your prophets have spoken: and upon this division of sentiments, concerning this matter of fact, are founded all the rest of the differences between your religion and ours.

Which of us go upon surer grounds, is no point for me to discuss at this time; my present business is only to represent impartially upon what principles the Jew and the christian should act respectively, in agreement with these persuasions above-mentioned; and what operation these principles should have had on either side, with respect to a naturalization bill.

In the first place, the Jew, in consequence of his belief that the Messiah hath not yet appeared, should still strictly adhere to the law of *Moses;* as strictly at least as his situation and circumstances will admit of. He should still consider himself as a member of a peculiar people, and of a community distinguished and separated from the rest of the world, by a number of rites and ordinances, which will not permit him to incorporate himself with any other people, or allow him to receive any man as a brother, till he first becomes a proselyte to the law of *Moses:* which law the Jew should still consider as his great rule of life; observing every circumstance which it prescribes, and

abstaining from all commerce with every thing which it hath prohibited.

True it is, your Talmudic doctors have explained this law, so as to admit of many relaxations of the literal precept; but still, so far as I have observed, keeping up the characters of distinction and separation, peculiar to your dispensation; excluding every one who is not a Jew, from Jewish privileges, and leaving no room for your religious or political intercourse with the gentiles, farther than your necessities may require.

But however, be this as it may, this rabbinical casuistry lies much out of the way of christians, and is not indeed universally received by yourselves; our judgment therefore of you and your religion, must be formed on and determined by the law of *Moses*, and your national history in your sacred books; to these, all of us, from the greatest to the least, may have free access, and these you must understand us to apply to every common case, wherein you and we are mutually concerned.

We find indeed, in *these* records also, that you have been sometimes dispensed with from the strict and rigorous observation of the Mosaical law. We read of some of your kings and priests, who partly transgressed and partly did not fulfil the law, and yet were blameless: not to mention several dispensations to inferior persons. But we observe too, that all these were cases of absolute necessity; and though in your present situation, such cases may seem to be and certainly are greatly multiplied, yet we suppose you to hold yourselves still bound to

a strict and rigorous observation of the law, and of every distinction and peculiarity of it, as far as ever your affairs and situation in the different countries you inhabit will allow. And thus, we think, stand your obligations in general upon the supposition that *Messiah the prince*, hath not yet appeared upon earth.

The obligations of a christian, who believes the *Messiah* to be already come, and particularly that *Jesus* is this *Messiah*, are very different from, and in many respects just contrary to those of a Jew. To the former, *Jesus Christ* and not *Moses*, is the lawgiver; and to *Jesus* he is to give ear *in all things, whatsoever he hath said unto him.* In consequence of which, he is not only not to observe those circumstances of separation and distinction prescribed by *Moses*, but he is not to observe any others of the like kind, or which would have the like effect. It is a part of his belief, that the *partition wall is broken down*, never more to be rebuilt; that the *hand-writing of ordinances is blotted out*, and the ordinances of *Jesus Christ* written in the *minds* and *hearts* of his faithful servants; that *the service which stood only in meats and drinks and divers washings and carnal ordinances*, were bound upon the *Jews* themselves no longer than *till the time of reformation*, which was the time when *Christ came an high priest of good things to come:* and finally, the christian is become the member of a covenant into which all sorts of persons are admitted, who *fear God* and *work righteousness*, without any exclusive ordinances enjoined by Christ; for thus runs the tenor of it: *ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put*

on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him; where there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore (as the elect of God holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye, &c.

In short, words cannot express obligations more opposite (in the article of *seclusion*) than those of the jewish and christian covenants. Under the former the door was shut, and the prime benefits of it inaccessable to all but Jews by nature; under the latter the door was thrown open, and entrance denied to none who sought it faithfully and sincerely. During *your* prosperity, the worship of God was performed with much pomp and magnificence; but *your place and nation being taken away, because you continued not in that covenant,* Almighty GOD sought for such to worship him, as *worshipped in spirit and in truth.* The law of *Moses* pronounced many men and many things unclean; the law of Christ declared all things clean, save only what really and effectually defiles the mind and conscience. And lastly, under the first covenant, the works of the law were of great importance; under the second of none at all: to a christian, *neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but that faith only which worketh by love.*

Let us now consider what effect these principles ought to have produced on either hand,

with respect to the bill for your more easy naturalization.

When we take a view of these your principles (of which christian charity requires we should believe you to be serious and sincere professors) and when we observe withall that your circumstances are upon the whole much more easy and tolerable, than in some periods within the four last centuries, it is not easy for us to conceive, what motive should induce you, either to solicit such a law as this, or even to make use of it, though it had been procured without any application at all on your part. It is clear to us, that while your religion and polity subsisted in your own country, intire and unadulterated, such a law as this in favour of the gentiles, would have been a most express contradiction to the law of *Moses;* and we apprehend, that the same law of *Moses*, and every practicable circumstance of it, being according to you, still in full force and virtue, it would be equally unlawful for you to admit any man to an intercommunity of civil privileges, (if you had any peculiar to yourselves) without a full conformity to your ritual, at this hour. Now the same law which thus excludes gentiles from your community, prohibits you from entering into theirs, *least you be insnared with the unclean thing.*

It seems to us, therefore, as if a free intercourse and open commerce with those whom you must from the very nature of your covenant, esteem impure and profane, would lay you under continued temptations to transgress the law of *Moses,* on many different and frequent occasions of familiarity with men of other

tongues, and other lips. Your lawgiver of old knew the deplorable consequences of allowing you a freedom of commercial dealings with gentile men, and therefore wisely prohibited, not only your alliances, but all manner of traffic with them, except in cases of absolute necessity, which commonly were very few. If you still retain your original veneration for *Moses*, these prohibitions and the reasons of them, are still the same, and, upon your principles, must be the same to the very times of your *Messiah*.

If you should allege, that your condition is extremely different from what it was, when *Moses* gave you the law; and that your occasions of a freer intercourse with the gentiles are grown indispensable of mere necessity; it is admitted; but admitted with this observation, viz. that no *necessity* obliged you to enlarge the commerce you had with us gentiles, before this bill passed, or beyond what you still enjoy, now that it is repealed. You are as to temporal matters, upon a very tolerable footing; and, in agreement with your law, and the obligations it lays upon you, might very possibly spare a good many advantages now in your hands; and in effect, ought to spare them, in so far as ever they occasion unnecessary relaxations in the observance of your law.

Upon the whole, we christians can no way account for your desiring a naturalization-bill, but upon the supposition that your law is not in that high repute with you as heretofore; that you begin to apprehend it may not be of that perpetual obligation which you have hitherto ascribed to it; that the reasons of many of its institutions, even where they might be com-

plied with, are now ceased; and particularly that your intercourse with the sinners of the gentiles, is not now so dangerous as when you were first forbidden to contract alliances, traffic, or accompany with them.

But then, whatever were *your* motives, whether these or any others, to solicit or accept of such a law as this; if you could get over your own scruples, so far as to desire a nearer and more advantageous connexion, with us christians, it was most certainly our indispensable duty, to agree to your proposals. Our principles teach us, and our obligations require us to receive every one to the common privileges of a fellow-citizen, who is willing to come under the common bonds of our civil allegiance, and who desires to live among us in peace and love, and in a mutual communication of friendly offices: and whoever it is that opposes such an union as this, he may call himself what he pleases, but he is no more a christian upon principle, than any member of your synagogue; or if a christian, a most high offender against our great law of charity, and the plainest principles and documents of the religion he professes. And his offence is, in this case, so much the more aggravated, as it may be presumeable that your drawing nearer to us, is a manifest token of the abatement of your ancient prejudices; an abatement, which if it is not our duty to encourage and promote, there is neither truth nor consistency in the christian religion.

It cannot be doubted, men and brethren, but you sometimes look into our scriptures, if it be only out of curiosity. I entreat you to make yourselves judges of this case with your own

eyes, and your own common sense; sit not down with the partial and mistaken accounts, which your opponents have given of our christian obligations in the late dispute: examine freely, and decide fairly whether there are not the strongest reasons, the most pressing motives, and the clearest precedents in our sacred books, to receive you to a participation of our temporal advantages, that words can express.

I do not refer you to particular passages, that you may not be misled by any of that kind of prejudice on my part, from which I would disengage you on the part of your adversaries. That *blindness, in part,* hath happened to us in some cases, is not less true, though a little more wonderful, than that it hath happened to you. Where this proves to be the case, it is as natural for our people to put their own mistaken sense on the gospel and the apostles, as for yours to misinterpret the law and the prophets. The only way to avoid imposition, where men are interested to misrepresent the truth, is to read and judge for ourselves.

My present undertaking, requires no more of me than to exculpate the christian religion from all imputation of severity, or unfriendliness towards you; nevertheless, as I am persuaded that many of my fellow-christians have opposed this bill, in the sincerity of their hearts, and out of a principle of honour for their profession, and its blessed author, I would bespeak your candid construction of the zeal of these well-designing men, by shewing how easy it was for those who had the management of it, to furnish them with specious arguments, the fallacy of which, very few of our people (con-

sidering our methods of religious education, to be accounted for by and by) are able to see through.

And I the more willingly apply myself to this task, as I hope to convince some of the more honest and reasonable of your late antagonists, of a common mistake in matters of religion, which may prove in the end of pernicious consequence in our civil policy, as it has already proved a great obstruction to the propagation of the christian faith.

First, then, from the circumstance that your forefathers were the betrayers and murderers of the blessed Jesus, and that you their posterity approve and vindicate this fact, it is inferred that you thereby render yourselves justly obnoxious to the professors of the christian religion, and unworthy to partake of any privileges in common with them.

Now this argument will certainly hold good with respect to the especial and peculiar privileges of the christian religion; nor is it impossible that some of you on certain occasions, may desire to partake of these, without changing your present opinion, of their spiritual efficacy at all. For example, the partaking of what we call the Lord's-supper, as the law stands now, is a necessary condition of your being naturalized. If any of you, considering this rite as a mere ordinance of the state, should resolve to comply with this condition, I should not blame the minister who, knowing your sentiments of Jesus Christ, should refuse to admit you to this holy table, along with the sincere believers of his flock.

But upon what christian grounds a minister or any man else can proceed, to exclude you from any other privileges, I own I see not. To be excluded from the common privileges of civil society, in any degree, is certainly a punishment, and indeed has been so considered in this controversy. But has any of your opponents shewn, that the christian religion has given us a power to inflict pains and penalties upon you? No, nor ever will, till he can shew that Jesus has left directions to his followers to resent and revenge his death upon the Jews and their posterity to all future generations. If this may be proved, not only the adversaries of this bill are in the right, but also those princes and inquisitors, who have put as many of you to cruel deaths, as they could lay their hands on.

I am verily persuaded, that there is not a serious man in this kingdom (the papists and their abettors excepted, who for these and other execrable tenets, are not to be ranked among christians)—There is not, I say, in my opinion, a serious man in the kingdom, who would carry his enmity against you to this miserable extremity. There are few protestants who do not see thus far into the genius and spirit of christianity. But they are also few who discern, that upon the same grounds christians are obliged to accommodate you with the same ease and conveniences in civil life, which they themselves enjoy, provided that you comply with the terms, upon which alone christians themselves are intituled to them; namely, demean yourselves honestly and peaceably, refuse none of the common burthens of civil society, and

seek the peace of the prince and people, who afford you their protection.

The spirit and disposition of the Lord *Jesus*, towards you, is well known to us, especially on that trying occasion when your forefathers gave him the greatest provocation. His general directions to his disciples, how to deal with those at enmity with them, by returning good for evil, and imitating the benevolence of our heavenly father, *who maketh his sun to shine on the evil, and on the good*, contain a very sufficient caution to all faithful christians, to offer no injury or abuse to you, or others in the same circumstances. Whoever therefore undertakes to revenge *his* cause upon you, though it is but by the lightest punishment he can inflict, such as the revilings of the tongue, not only does it without any commission, but in express contradiction to the spirit, precepts, and example of the Lord and master he pretends to serve.

There is, however, a peculiarity or two in your history, which may be very apt to mislead unwary christians into an opinion, that their ill usage of you may be well pleasing to GOD.

I. The first case is this: the unparaleled sorrows and afflictions which you and your ancestors have undergone, since the crucifixion of Jesus, are notorious to the whole world. These, your own writers authorize us to say, have been the just judgments of God upon your nation and people, for their iniquities. But *we* stop not here, having, as we think, not only the prophecies of *Jesus* himself, but the nature, the kind and continuance of your sufferings, to bear us out in ascribing them to your guilt, in first crucifying the *Lord of glory*, and still

persisting in approving and vindicating this deed of your fathers to this very hour.

And thus finding your punishment evidently connected with a fact, so nearly related to our most holy faith, it is almost natural for a christian of great zeal and little knowledge, to imagine that he has a sufficient commission to maltreat you in return for the despite done to his Saviour: and in this light have the late anti-judaical demagogues all along explained their duty to our common people.

Whereas, there is no exception of the Jews out of the precepts of charity, and forbearance above-mentioned: nor can any christian shew a commission or a command in our whole scriptures, saying, "go and afflict this people, till they shall repent and turn christians."

It is well known how soon and how fast the *Romans* declined, after they had destroyed your city, and slaughtered and banished your people. And if the prosperous reigns of the two emperors, who more immediately took away your place and nation, should be offered in abatement of this surmise, it should be remembered, that as you gave them unjustifiable provocation, so were they inclinable to shew your forefathers more mercy, than they themselves were inclinable to accept.

Perhaps if the fact were to be examined, the observation that your persecutors have seldom prospered, might be more remarkably verified in *christian*, than in pagan states: nor do I believe it necessary to except your persecutors in our own country: but as this is a tender point, I shall forbear appealing to particular instances.

On another hand it might have been observed, that during your (sometimes very short) intervals of respite from your calamities, you have not only barely subsisted, but even flourished and increased amazingly, and in such sort as has puzzled some of our historians to account for it.* Hence the best and wisest of our divines, observing how you have been sustained through scenes of calamity, embittered by the universal enmity of mankind, under which no other people upon earth, have found it possible to subsist for a tenth part of the period since the destruction of your city:—Our ablest divines, I say, observing this, have justly concluded that you must have been preserved for some especial purposes of divine providence, respecting the consummation of the christian, as well as the jewish dispensation.

If, therefore, no stress at all should be laid upon those instances in your history *before* Christ, which plainly shew that the rod of your correction was always thrown into the fire, when it had done its work; what has happened since, should certainly make us cautious how we add to your affliction, as there are so strong presumptions, both in the scriptures, and in the matter of fact, that our final lot and portion will have an immediate and intimate connexion with yours.

II. There is another prejudice among our common people, which has been diligently cultivated and greatly improved, during the controversy about the late act in your favour, and it is this

* Vid. *Fuller's* Church History. Book 3. page 9. and Book 3 Cent. 13, page 87.

All your own prophets, from *Moses* to *Malachi* have, as it were, with one voice, represented your forefathers as a wicked, faithless, and stubborn generation of men, upon whom neither the favours nor the frowns of heaven, could make any lasting impressions. Our own scriptures resume the same accusation, which is rendered the more considerable to us, as it comes from the mouths of *Jesus* and his apostles. An historian of your own, *Josephus*, continues the charge, which has lost nothing of its bitterness in passing through the hands of those *pagan* and *popish* historians, who have transmitted any accounts of you and your affairs to these latter ages. Hence you are considered by us, as an abandoned and incorrigible people, whom we are at liberty to treat with every circumstance of contempt and indignity.

For my own part, I could wish the grounds and reasons of this prejudice might be reconsidered. It is a very easy matter to shew that, admitting the truth of the fact, the consequence drawn from it is false upon the principles of christianity: but I am much mistaken if more stress has not been laid upon this article of your wickedness for some centuries backward, than is equitable: for

1. The wickedness complained of by our own prophets, as well as by Christ and his apostles, was the wickedness of your priests and rulers; *Josephus* too seems to insist on such disorders and transgressions, as plainly derived from the extreme corruption of *the head*. Since that time, seventeen hundred years of calamity have passed over your heads; and without some plain evidence to the contrary, it is but reason-

able to presume, that these long and severe trials in the furnace of affliction, must have had some good effect upon the worst of you: at least the accusation must be shifted, as for the greatest part of that time, your priests and rulers have had little or no opportunity of committing the specific iniquities charged on them in the scriptures. Perhaps neither I nor any other man, out of your fraternity, can say how the case stands with your people in general; but that a considerable reformation has been brought about among your heads and leaders, will not, I think, be denied by any who are sufficiently acquainted with them. And if the connexions and dependencies among yourselves have no influence upon the morals of your common people, your case differs from any yet recorded in history, even in any ancient history of your own.

The charge standing thus in your authentic histories, we have the greatest reason to suspect the accounts which the subsequent pagan and popish writers have left us concerning the Jews. Even the christian fathers, before the times of popery, should be cautiously listened to on this head. Princes of all states, and of all religions among whom you have sojourned, have made various uses of you in their politics; and easily found the means, in dark and credulous times, to place many a foolish, unfortunate, and wicked measure to your account, in which you might be, perhaps, both the innocent and unwilling instruments, but of which you were almost always sure to be the victims.

2. As a farther abatement of this prejudice, I would desire my fellow-christians seriously to

read over the gospels and epistles in the new testament, and as they go along to contrast the preceptive part, with our present *christian* practices; and then, let it be considered in what terms a *Paul*, a *Peter*, a *John*, or a *James*, who should be sent to call us to repentance, would characterize our manners and the *now* respectable examples that recommend them. Our blessed master hath left behind him a saying, which he made use of to soften the severity of your chief priests and elders, in a remarkable case: *let him that is without sin among you, cast the first stone.* This sentence should never be forgot, whenever the above-mentioned objection to your civil incorporation with christians is remembered. I am greatly afraid it has little less propriety in the one case, than it had in the other. For my own part, I apprehend the balance to be so little in *our* favour, that if it could be made appear that the *Jews* are now as wicked as they were at the siege of *Jerusalem*, I should begin to tremble for the *christians* of my own country, and fear that *their judgment now of a long time lingereth not.*

III. There has been a third christian objection raised against your naturalization, which, I find, has puzzled a far greater number of our people than it has enlightened. It is taken from the tenour of your ancient prophecies, which speak of your continuing a distressed and dispersed people, till a certain period, when you shall be gathered to your own land, with circumstances of glory and triumph, which will attract the desire of all nations towards you,

and inspire them with endeavours to attach themselves to your interests, and become partakers of your prosperity. Whence it has been argued, that to endeavour to procure you a fixed settlement in this, or any other christian country, may be construed into an impious attempt to defeat these prophecies, and consequently to fight against God.

But this argument, as it was quite new, had not the luck to take with our common people; who had no notion of a future desire to accompany you to your own country, whilst they found so little inclination in themselves for the present, of mixing with you at home. Besides, some of our popular orators, made so much of these premises, that they left room for an aukward conclusion enough, namely, that it is a sin to endeavour the conversion of the *Jews* to christianity, by *any* means; since that would unavoidably fix and settle them in the place where they should be converted, and with obligations a little more binding than any that would arise from the naturalization bill. In truth this argument helped to open the eyes of some, whom other sorts of reasoning had well nigh imposed on. Upon searching our scriptures they found, that by accommodating you with every thing which might make your condition as fellow-subjects, as easy and comfortable as their own, they were fulfilling the will of God, and the command of Christ, who, as I said above, in laying down the royal law, *thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, had made no exception of the Jews. Whereas what course they should take to fulfil, or what course they should avoid that they might not defeat the

ancient prophecies they found not. They concluded therefore with *Moses, secret things belong unto the Lord our* GOD, *but the things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children, that we may do all the words of the law of God:* and they thought they found a very christian comment upon this passage of the law, in these words of *Jesus* to *Peter:—If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee, follow thou me.*

There have been many other arguments of the religious kind offered against your naturalization, in the course of the late controversy, which unhappily prove nothing but the extreme ignorance of the disputants, in the first rudiments of the christian religion. Such are all they which went upon the supposition, that the civil privileges to which you would have been intituled, by the late bill, were the *birth-right of christians;* as if the inheritance purchased for us by the blood of *Jesus*, consisted of the honours, possessions, and profits of this world; such are they also which insisted upon a retrospect to your conduct in times past, and thereupon would needs ground the equity of a strict retaliation; being ignorant (willingly one would think) that the doctrine of *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*, was no doctrine of Jesus Christ. In plain truth, though the honour of christianity has been the watch word in the late alarm, yet so it has happened, that weaker reasonings, and more dishonourable to the profession, would hardly have been exhibited by men, who had never read three chapters either in your scriptures or our own.

By this time, men and brethren, it is probable I may have raised your curiosity to an uncommon pitch; and you will be impatient to be informed, whence it comes to pass that our scriptures being open to all, and our preachers of the gospel so many, our people should run into these strange mistakes in such incredible numbers, and with such headlong zeal and prejudice, which you perhaps may be inclined to think the single precept of universal charity, very sufficient to restrain.

Be pleased then to know, that though the great truths of the christian religion lie so plain and clear in our scriptures, that they may be easily discerned by a single eye, and easily understood by a very mean capacity, yet so it is, that great numbers of us are either utterly ignorant of them, or at the best very imperfectly instructed in them. Not that any of our people are not instructed in *some* religious principles, or that the religion they learn, is not the christian so called. Some pains of this kind, more or less, are taken with the most of us. But the misfortune is, that instead of being taught christianity, more immediately from the sayings of Christ and his apostles, we are made to learn our religion from the writings and compositions of men, who either widely mistook the mind of Christ, and the design of his dispensation, or wilfully misrepresented it for selfish and secular ends: and these, being men of great reputation for their religious zeal, and their religious learning, have easily found the means of passing the meaning of the scriptures, so mistaken and misrepresented upon the common people, for sound and orthodox; and what

is worse, have taken advantage of the peoples ignorance and credulity, to bind these mistaken interpretations of scripture, upon the consciences of them and their posterity, to all succeeding times: excluding every one who should not assent to them from outward communion with the faithful conformists, and as far as in them lay, from the benefits of the christion covenant.

These impositions indeed have not been the same in kind or in degree, in every place where the christian name hath obtained; but have nevertheless all of them sprung from the same corrupted fountain, namely, an attempt to establish and incorporate the christian religion with some kind of secular polity; in which, as they had no authentic model to go by but *yours*, and as none of them for very shame could take in *all* the particulars of *that*, they have found it necessary to vary their schemes in such sort, as to create infinite dissentions in the christian community, as well as greatly to weaken the energy of the christian precept, upon the lives and manners of mankind.

It is true there have risen up from time to time, men well enough disposed to plead the cause of the gospel, and considerable enough to form a party in its favour: men, who have asserted their christian liberty, in the face of every doctor, and every church, which hath pretended to preach or prescribe another gospel, besides that in the new testament. And yet no sooner were these very men invested with the power of framing a church for their brethren, than they utterly forgot their own principles, and made no scruple to bind those very bur-

thens upon others, which they had absolutely refused to bear themselves.

The conduct of these men is the more astonishing, as many of them wanted not the sagacity to discern, nor, on some occasions, the freedom to display the nature, connexion, and dependance of the two dispensations, as well as the disparity of their sanctions and obligations. These things indeed could hardly be mistaken by any one, who gave but a common attention to the tenor and scope of the old and new testament.

Why your religion should be settled upon exclusive forms and privileges, the circumstances of your history, and the views of divine Providence, in the plan of your dispensation (which are now explained by events) have fully informed us. We now see that, without incorporating your religion and civil policy together, the partition-wall intended to separate you from the gentile world, could neither have been erected nor kept up. But then the ends of this separation being but temporary, and limited to a certain period, (which conditions of it we learn from your own scriptures) the uses of those forms and peculiar institutions of your law, which distinguished you from other nations of the earth, could have no longer duration. When you were first shut up and inclosed in an exclusive ritual, the gentiles were utterly indisposed and unprepared to come into covenant with the living and true God. In *the fulness of time*, this unfitness and indisposition wore off; and then was the season for breaking down the fortresses and strongholds which had hitherto prevented the intercourse

of the gentiles with you. *Salvation and blessing upon all the families of the earth*, were to be *of the Jews*; which could never happen whilst the *Jews* were permitted to appropriate this *salvation* and *blessing* to themselves, by the exclusive privileges of the *Mosaic* law. The opening, we say, was made by *Jesus Christ*, agreeably to the predictions of your prophets, the coincidence of his character and ministry with them, and to the final ruin of your city and temple, and with them of your civil and ecclesiastical polity.

This is the account in which christian divines, of almost all communions have agreed; and yet, amazing to hear, christian divines of almost all communions, have found no other means of supporting the churches, to which they have respectively adhered, but by appealing to *your* institutions, and that sometimes in the same breath with which they were giving such reasons for breaking down the wall of partition, founded on them, as plainly shewed the absolute impropriety of re-building the same fences, or any thing like them in any future times.

It was indeed in vain to think of building these churches upon the true foundation of Christ and his apostles, and has never been attempted but with ill success, and sometimes with shame and disgrace; which obliged the builders to use foreign materials.

For example, if they wanted to vindicate their system of doctrines, they were met by such passages as these. *In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Though we, or an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel, than that we*

have preached unto you, let him be accursed. That ye might learn in us, not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. Beware, least any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy. Every word of God is pure;—add thou not unto his words, least he reprove thee and thou be found a liar.

Again, seeking to justify rites, ordinances, and ceremonies, of different kinds, besides the reproof of *Jesus Christ* above-written, they were utterly disconcerted, by the sayings of him and his apostles to this effect:—*God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage. Ye observe days and months and times and years. I am afraid of you, least I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world; why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances. Let no man judge you in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths; which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ. In which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, which* [service] *stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation.* &c. &c.

Lastly, endeavouring to support that kind

of church power, by which they had bound these burthens upon men's consciences, and which for that purpose they had interwoven and incorporated with state policy, they were put to shame, though not to silence, by the following decisions of the genuine christian law. *My kingdom is not of this world. Man, who made me a judge and a divider over you. Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon earth: for one is your father which is in Heaven. Neither be ye called masters, for one is your master even Christ. Neither as being Lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.* Diotrephes, *who loveth to have the pre-eminence, receiveth us not. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that ye shall receive the greater condemnation. All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are not of the father, but are of the world.* With innumerable other passages, all conspiring in this great truth, that the preaching, propagating, or professing the gospel of Christ, had no connexion with the powers or pomp, or riches of this world.

These plain declarations, as I said, obliged the unwise master builders of modern churches, to have recourse to foreign materials; adopting partly your plan, now grown obsolete and absurd in the christian scheme; and partly the meretricious tokens of the Apocalyptic beast, which hath ever militated against it.

Hence it is, that, maugre this pure and perfect pattern in the gospel, and notwithstanding the professions of many whole bodies of christians, that they are governed by nothing else, you see so different a face of things, from that which, if you ever read our scriptures, you have reason to expect. You see christians, in different countries, shutting up themselves, and shutting out others, by rituals, ceremonies, ordinances, creeds, confessions, scholastic systems, and political establishments, all contrived by art and man's device, to the infinite distress of multitudes of sincere disciples of Christ, and the inexpressible scandal of his religion.

You see ——— but there is something still worse, which you see not, namely, an unhappy necessity upon those who adhere to these human inventions, to accommodate and adjust their teachings to some kind of consistency with them; whence it comes to pass, that the gospel of Christ is preached with partiality, with hypocrisy, with obscurity, with lukewarmness, with the carnal words of man's wisdom, and too often in terms irreconcileable with the truth of GOD, and by men most unfit to appear in any such province.

Long use and habit, and the ease and convenience of substituting the *form*, instead of the *power* of godliness, hath made our people *love to have it so;* to which, early prejudice, and the fear of finding themselves in the wrong, have annexed a commodious persuasion, that their own church and its system (whatever it be) is the only way to acceptance with GOD; and that if either its limits were inlarged, its power reduced, its government and discipline

reformed, its revenues otherwise applied, or more equally or equitably distributed, there would be immediately an end of christianity itself. Hence they contract an incurable aversion (not only for you from whom they have borrowed these maxims, and whose, sometimes most improper, and incongruous devotions they use; but) for all those who profess christianity upon any other principles than they do; and such more especially as are for bringing religion back to its only true standard.

What effect these prejudices and persuasions have upon the religious debates of christians, one with another, though it may be very easy for you to observe, is not so very material to my present purpose to remark, as it is to shew you how they influence our judgments, whenever any kind of our intercourse with you is brought into question: of which be pleased to take the following specimen from a pamphlet, re-published at least, in the heat of the late controversy.

"The *Jews*, by God's own precepts, and "their own constitutions, (whilst the chosen "people) neither could, might, nor would permit the *heathen-gentiles* to set up their altars "nor idols among them; and *no more* should "*our* prelates suffer *Jews* synagogues, nor permit Judaism to be preached or taught in any "diocese. The *Jews* likewise *never* suffered "the apostles to teach or preach in their cities, "*as the whole history of the* Acts *abundantly* "*testify* [testifies;] which precedents *of the* "*Jews own making*, may *deservedly* be retorted "upon them, and the *Jews* expelled with

"their *idolatries* and blasphemies out of all "christian cities."*

You see here, men and brethren, a christian churchman, so called, delivering his sentiments of you (in agreement, no doubt, with the articles of his own faith, but at the same time) without the least apparent conception, or even suspicion of any difference in the nature, the genius or the conditions of the jewish and christian covenants, respectively; and consequently without the least regard to the charity, meekness, and forbearance prescribed in the latter, or to the truth with respect to either of them: and this too (if the pamphlet records its own nativity fairly) at a time when no public consideration of your affairs (if that is any excuse for falsehood and passion, and clamour) gave this author any of that provocation, with which the tendency of the late jew-bill was supposed to furnish the declaimers of last year.

Now, in this short citation, (not selected on purpose, I assure you,) the following particulars are more especially remarkable.

1. By this parenthesis, *(whilst the chosen people)* this writer seems to be of opinion, that you are not still a chosen people, contrary to the express doctrine of our apostle *Paul*, who, in the 11th. chapter of his epistle to the *Romans*, demonstrates that all our christian privileges, are owing to the original *election* of the *Jews*, and that we are now partaking with them of the *fatness of their olive-tree*, no otherwise than as *branches grafted into a stock*, rooted still

* *Hiſtorical Treatiſe of* Jews *and* Judaiſm *in* England, p. 28, 29. pretending to be printed in 1720.

in the same *loving kindness*, and *sure mercies* of the Father, which planted your ancestors at first. And accordingly, to the question, *hath God cast off his people?* He answers—*God forbid.—God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew*, [i. e. elected]—*even at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.* And that the Jews of this generation, do not belong to this remnant, is more than this author knows.

2. He puts your synagogues and the circumstances of your faith and worship, upon the same footing with the idols and altars of ancient paganism: but before he comes to the end of his next period, suspecting probably, or rather feeling the incongruity of this analogy, he finds himself obliged,—

3. To accuse you most falsely and wickedly of *idolatry;* of which the whole christian, pagan and mahometan world, who know any thing of your principles and worship, will join to acquit you. Indeed, he puts so much force to this argument, that, overshooting the *Jews*, it does real and effectual execution among his good friends, the popish priests, friars, and jesuits; and, upon his own principles, affords our prelates a solid answer to his complaint, *viz.* That they are more favourable to the Jews than to the Papists.

4. He says, "The *Jews* never suffered the "apostles to preach or teach in their cities, as "the whole history of the *Acts* abundantly "testifies." Had this man ever seen the history to which he thus confidently appeals? If yea, how does he think the Jews might be employed, while the christian *churches had rest*

throughout ALL JUDEA, *and* Galilee *and* Samaria, *and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied?* Acts ix. 31.—For that these churches were edified and multiplied, by the teaching and preaching of the apostles, will admit of no controversy.

5. He says, "these precedents [of intolerance to pagans and christians] were of the "*Jews* own making," and yet he had told us before, that one of them was made by GOD's *own precepts.*

6. Lastly, he is of opinion that "these pre- "cedents may be *deservedly* retorted upon the "*Jews*," for the honour of christianity, I suppose. That is to say, for all that *Jesus Christ* and his apostles have said to the contrary, christians may *deservedly hate their enemies, curse them by whom they are cursed, and render to every man evil for evil.* No, by this gentleman's leave, whatever your demerits may be, men and brethren, to God-ward or to us-ward, I will rather learn my divinity from a heathen poet, than from such a sorry teacher of christianity as this.——*Tametsi vos digni hac contumelia vel maxume, indigni tamen nos qui faceremus.*

The spiteful virulence of this small performance, has indeed given me some suspicion that it might be drawn up by the hand of one of those waspish mortals, who are imported from *Douay* and *St. Omers*, for the righteous work of converting english heretics to the catholic faith. There is nothing at all in it, but what is perfectly agreeable to the ignorance and assurance of this class of men. But, however, it

may possibly be otherwise. The inferences above cited, are calculated, we see, for the use of the prelates of our present hierarchy; and are indeed strictly deducible from principles, on which the powers of the hierarchy in our own protestant church, have more than once been asserted: from principles to which every high churchman and woman among us, adhere to this hour.

While things are therefore in this train, while our scriptures are thus wrested, misapplied, and even belied to favour the prejudiced and interested systems of church-authority, you will not wonder that so few of our people are taught *the way of God in truth*, or that so many of them should deviate from the *words* of *eternal life*, and follow phantoms and shadows of religion, dressed out with great pomp and formality by mere human invention: nor will you be too forward to complain of hard usage from those mistaken men, who deal no worse with you, than, if they had the power, they would do with some of their fellow-christians; where the great law of charity admits not even of that sorry subterfuge which, as they plead and pretend, leaves them room to treat you, as if you were no ways intituled to the common regards of humanity.

In the mean time, men and brethren, I trust you may have acquaintance with some of us, who have not so learned CHRIST; but are willing to receive you to a free and friendly participation of the civil privileges, they themselves enjoy. We have among us, men who grieve to see the beautiful simplicity of the gospel disfigured, and adulterated with forms and

circumstantials so foreign to the spirit and design of it, and so obstructive of its true interests;—men, whose *heart's desire and prayer to God is, that* ISRAEL *may be saved*, and that the christian religion, being restored to its native purity, and purged from the dross of human traditions and worldly rudiments, may be the blessed means of once more reinstating you in the favour, and recommending you to the mercy of God; an event they think they should have no reason to despair of, if proper opportunities were afforded of shewing you (what is really the truth of the case) that the deepest and most inveterate of your prejudices arise from and are nourished by (not the genuine doctrines of the gospel of Christ, but) the artificial and unnatural figments of conceited philosophers, and wicked politicians, imposed upon the christian world, as the essential attributes of a religion, which renounces and abhors them. And while this continues to be the case, your adversaries are certainly wiser *in their generation*, in striving with all their might to keep you at a convenient distance, than they who would invite you to a nearer examination of the truth, as it is in *Jesus*: least by comparing the face of our religion, as it appears in our common forms, with the true spirit and design of it exhibited in our sacred oracles, you might come to entertain a notion, that many of us, whose religious pretences run very high, may, at the bottom, believe no more of the new testament than you do.

I am, Men and Brethren,
An affectionate well wisher, and to the best of my endeavours,
A sincere friend to you and to all mankind,

POSTSCRIPT,

To the CHRISTIAN READER.

I EASILY foresee that the concessions made in favour of the *jewish* morals, will be the most exceptionable part of this address, to the *warm-hearted* englishman; whom I therefore beg leave to refer to the 16th. page of the former of Mr. *Tucker's* excellent letters on *naturalization;* where he will find this matter, which I have only ventured to state in the way of problem, illustrated by some facts that are well worth his notice. The late bishop of *Durham's* inference indeed from those facts, I can by no means agree to. It seems to me not to have been well considered, and certainly deserves a little more examination, than Mr. T. had occasion to bestow upon it in the place where he cites it, which is in the page above-mentioned. "His lord-"ship, it seems, could not in conscience ap-"prove of a general naturalization, because it "seemed to him to be the bringing of inno-"cent strangers into temptations." Let us see how this reasoning will turn out. The church of *England* hath, on many occasions, affected to take the lead of all the protestant churches

in *Europe*, by the name of—*the pillar and glory of the reformation.* She is incorporated into the civil establishment of her country, with circumstances of honour and emolument, unknown to the protestant churches abroad, with a view that her clergy may apply themselves with more encouragement and spirit, to the instruction and edification of the people committed to their charge; for that is the service in consideration, of which, as we are informed by a very competent judge,* the state hath entered into *alliance* with the church, on terms so very honourable and advantageous to the latter. And is it then after all come to this, that instead of being the *salt of the earth*, and *the light of the* [protestant] *world;* instead of being the *pillar* and *glory* of the reformation, she hath so far degenerated, as to suffer her members to become the *nuisances* and *scandals* of it? A people with whom the reformed of other countries, nay, perhaps the *Jews* themselves cannot have the common intercourse of fellow-citizens, but at the peril of losing their innocence and virtue? Deplorable case!—— However, if it is really the case, the bishop of *Durham* was in the right to own it: but, with great deference to his lordship's judgment, by no means in the right to ground an argument upon it against a general naturalization. For be it considered, who were the strangers that would have been thus terribly exposed to temptations, by becoming denizens of *Great Britain?* Most probably a large majority of them, poor persecuted protestants of *France* and other

* The Rev. Dr. *Warburton.*

popish countries:—Men, who have even *resisted unto blood, striving against sin:*—A people who have had every kind of terror, and every kind of allurement laid before them, to draw them off from the ways of godliness, without effect; and who, in spite of all the wiles of artful hypocrites, and all the violence of merciless tyrants, have by the grace of God adhered firmly to the *truth* of the gospel; and could his lordship desire stronger security, that such strangers as these would not easily depart from the *purity* of it?—unless, perhaps, vice and impiety, have more attractive charms in *Great Britain,* than in other countries. His lordship's scruples of conscience, we see, would leave these miserable men to the sad alternative, either of suffering the shipwreck of a tender conscience, or of enduring the spoiling of their goods, the imprisonment of their persons, and in any case the certain deprivation of the means of worshipping God, according to their persuasion: and all this for what? why, lest ease and liberty should expose them to temptations:—Temptations, which we know many thousands escape, who live in the midst of them, with no such restraint and caution as naturalized foreigners would be obliged to observe, by the very nature of their situation. Thus it often happens to the best of men, that their zeal for securing an inferior, and a disputable point, outruns their charity, even where the obligations of it are the clearest and the strongest: and thus it will for ever happen, when we pretend to overrule such plain and evident dictates of christianity, as plead for a general

naturalization, by interposing our own judgment, concerning *fitnesses* and *expediences*, drawn from considerations, with which we have nothing at all to do. In my humble opinion, the only consequence of the religious kind, which ought to be drawn from the wickedness of our own, or any other people, is the necessity of providing and putting in practice, the speediest and most probably effectual means of reforming them; of which the naturalizing more innocent strangers, is not the least promising. When the God of *Israel* had found all the ordinary, and many miraculous means of calling that people to repentance ineffectual, it pleased him to *provoke them to jealousy, by those who were*, (in their estimation) *no people*: that is to say, by bringing into competition with them, nations and people, whom they held in the extremest contempt. No body will say, that the reputation foreign protestants are in among us, will disqualify them for doing us this good office at least. But Mr. *Tucker* himself, hath touched this argument in so masterly a manner, * that nothing but a most candid, generous, and grateful heart, could dispose him to do honour to bp. *Butler's* memory, by appealing to his premises, in the passage above cited, and at the same time to resist the temptation he must have had, to expose the weakness of his lordship's conclusion. For my own part, I never could bring myself to think a bad argument (wherever I met with it) the better for the sanction of a great name. Mis-

* See this worthy gentleman's *Reflections on the expediency of a law, for the naturalization of foreign proteſtants*: particularly the *queries* in ſection, xxi. of the ſecond part; printed for *Trye*, 1752.

takes in matters of importance always do the more mischief, for being recommended by venerable authorities; and therefore, as I have no greater obligation to the late bishop of *Durham*, than any other man who hath read his writings, without knowing any thing of his person, I shall offer a conjecture of my own, why the foregoing reflexions on the case of foreign protestants, easy and obvious as they are, might escape his lordship's penetration. Of his lordship's sensibility of the corruption of our people, besides his verbal declaration above-mentioned, we have a convincing instance in print,* where he hath also recommended an expedient of reformation, which is "an endeavour in the clergy to keep up the "face and form of religion with decency and "reverence, and in such a degree as to bring "the thoughts of religion often to men's minds, "and then to make THIS FORM more and more "subservient to promote the *reality* and *power* "of it." And such was his lordship's opinion of the efficacy of religious forms for this purpose, that he scrupled not to appeal to the edifying effects, even of the popish superstitions, upon the single account of their being frequently repeated. Now, I must freely confess, that if I had this high opinion of the force and virtue of forms in religion, the naturalization of foreign protestants would be my dread and my aversion. How differently foreign protestants are principled in this article, every one knows. Nor, since the appearance of some late *Disquisitions* among ourselves, are the forms

* Charge, 1752.

of our own church likely to acquire any additional veneration, with those who give themselves leave to examine things of that nature, with any reasonable attention. Might not therefore the examples of foreign protestants, raise a jealousy in the serious part of our own communion, that, having kept their innocence and integrity, so much longer than ourselves, there might be some motives to virtue and industry in *their* way of professing christianity, of which *ours* is destitute? And if such a suspicion as this should rise to a fair probability, undoubtedly the rules of good policy, as well as the honour of true religion, would require us to adopt some of their principles and usages, instead of some of our own, by way of trying what good effect such alterations would have upon the manners and dispositions of *englishmen*.* Whether bp. *Butler* had any apprehensions of this kind, which might influence his judgment concerning a general naturalization, I presume not to say; but this we have good leave to remark, both from ancient and modern experience, that prospects of such reformations are extremely disagreeable to great churchmen in general; and I am much mistaken, if such

* If we may credit *John a Lasco*, king *Edward* VI. and Abp. *Cranmer*, had a design of perfecting the english reformation, "by allowing strangers to have churches, wherein to perform all "things according to apostolical observation only, that by this means "the english churches might be excited by degrees to purge out the "rites and ceremonies, used under popery, and to embrace apostoli-"cal purity, with the unanimous consent of the states of the king-"dom." But this wise project ended, as many others like it have done, and many more will do; *some great persons stood in the way.* Apostolical religion, is not religion for gentlemen. NEAL's hist. of the Puritans. Vol. I. page 79.

prospects are among the least and lowest of those considerations, which do, and probably will keep the door of a general naturalization fast locked and bolted against foreign protestants, for generations to come, notwithstanding the pains Mr. *Tucker* hath taken, to rid his orthodox brethren of their fears "that the "church of *England* will be endangered by "the admission of reformed foreigners, to the "privileges of british subjects." To speak my mind without reserve, since the benefits of a general naturalization, upon the maxims of the soundest policy, and the righteousness of it upon the principles of the christian religion, have been so clearly made out, I cannot think it worth any man's while to pay the least respect to objections, which terminate in the interests of any particular class of men, who are not both able and willing to offer the public an equivalent in some reasonable proportion, to the loss it sustains by the want of so desirable a law. Are the services, or the merit of the church of *England*, such an equivalent? This might be pretended with some shew of reason, if it could be made appear that the church of *England*, applied her own peculiar forms and discipline to better effect than other churches. But there is an end of this pretence, as soon as ever the concession is made that strangers of other communions are *more innocent*, that is to say, *better christians* than our own people. I must confess I have no notion of determining the excellence or perfection of any *human* constitutions, by any other criterion besides their influence on society. The church of *England*, I am afraid, will not stand this test: and this

being a point of great consequence, a lover of his religion and country, cannot justly be found fault with, if his solicitude should lead him to inquiries, where the failing may probably be? These inquiries have been lately made with great freedom, and with great impartiality: and upon examining the result with all the capacity I am master of, I have the misfortune to differ with Mr. *Tucker*, concerning the comparative perfection of the church of *England*. Methinks she has not so many or so just pretensions to apostolical purity, as some other churches which have not made so conspicuous a figure. I am therefore for having her constitution reviewed, and even, if there should be occasion, new modeled, not by the system of any other church, but upon the true genuine plan of a christian church, as it is delineated with sufficient simplicity and perspicuity, in the scriptures of the new testament; nor, though I am a member of, and constantly communicate with the church of England, can I agree with such of my fellows as believe the beauty of the church would be spoiled by taking away her blemishes. If the injudicious zeal of our people stand in the way of an ecclesiastical reformation, be it the care and employment of the friends of truth, of religion, of liberty, whether of the clergy or laity, whether natives or foreigners to disabuse them with respect to all their prejudices and deceptions. Let us mince the matter no longer. Be it freely confessed, because it is the truth, that instead of improving upon the original plan of our first reformers, we have been from the days of queen *Elizabeth*, departing still farther and farther from it; edging by im-

perceptible degrees still more and more, towards the corruptions in popery, particularly by fostering the ambition, the ease, and opulence of our clergy, and thereby giving a double advantage to our adversaries; to infidels, too much colour for that pretence, that religion is the invention of statesmen, contrived purely to serve political ends; to popish priests the opportunity of arguing *a fortiori*, in favour of their own superstitious rites, and usurped authority to the infinite hazard of our invaluable civil establishment, and the manifest disparagement of so much of our ecclesiastical, as is worth the preserving for the ends of promoting godliness and honesty among our people. And therefore, should it still continue to be objected against a general naturalization of foreign protestants, that by such a measure the church would be brought into danger; be it answered without hesitation, so much the better, because nothing ever was meant at the bottom by *the danger of the church*, but the danger of her being reformed, and reduced to a more protestant and christian scheme of government, doctrine and worship; which would be the greatest blessing that could happen to the church, and not the least that could happen to the state, and should indeed have been added to the list of those public benefits, which the excellent Mr. *Tucker* hath demonstrated to be the certain consequences of a general naturalization of foreign protestants; for which, and other services of the same tendency, that worthy person deserves every monument of gratitude, which his country has to bestow upon her most distinguished patriots.

FINIS.

A REPLY TO *Dr. TUCKER's* STRICTURES, ON THE PRECEDING POSTSCRIPT; IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

MDCCCI.

A REPLY, &c.

DEAR SIR,

IF I could conveniently have transmitted to you or your learned friend, the small tract to which the *Postscript* I sent you belongs, I might have saved myself a good deal of trouble in answering his papers now before me; many of his arguments being there obviated, in such a manner at least, as would have induced him, perhaps, to have offered me satisfaction in another way; but as I cannot at this time part with those papers, I shall with all possible brevity, as well for my own sake as your's, consider his pleas for the church, paying a proper regard to his disinclination to continue the controversy; concerning which, however, (as I may stand in the light of the first mover of contention) it is requisite to say something for myself.

The time was, when I thought of the church of England, as Mr. T. does; a course of study, (that of the scriptures especially) and many opportunities of conversing with some friends, who studied the subject, and thought it of importance, as well as myself, obliged me to change my sentiments; I have always, however, had a great diffidence of those opinions, which are

properly my own, and have been always willing to bring them to every test, that might enable me to correct them, or incourage me to persevere in them; one's efforts this way may be called controversy, and that I know, with peaceable and candid men, has an ill sound. Controversial writers are accused of aiming at victory, rather than truth: that, I think, I may say, with some assurance of my own heart, is not my case. I think the question before us of the utmost importance, both with regard to our ministerial success for the present, and our future account hereafter. And I will freely own, that it is impossible for me to *rest*, while I have the least prospect of gaining any farther light into so momentous an affair, of which I may probably at some time make a practical use, which will have no small effect, both upon my present and future interests: and where are those lights to be had, but from those who have their reasons for entertaining a different opinion, and may be induced by an amicable debate to communicate them?

Upon these accounts, I hope you will excuse my importunity, though Dr. T. will not: for whom, however, I have the highest esteem, for his work's sake, and therefore think it incumbent upon me to disculpate myself of the suspicions of directing any personal reflection towards him in the postscript, where, it seems, he thinks, he finds a charge of *inconsistency*.

As I cannot find any such charge in those papers, so I am very sure I did not mean so much as an insinuation that way. Dr. T. had considered *naturalization* chiefly in respect of its *expedience* in a political view; but many

passages of his excellent letters, convinced me that he likewise saw the, *righteousness* of it upon the principles of the gospel. This I own I could not reconcile *in my own mind* to Dr. T's. professed veneration for the church of England, from an attachment to which, he could not but know so much prejudice had arisen against naturalizations, particularly in the late case of the Jews. Christianity indeed was the pretence; but such christianity only as is taught and practised in our church, was the thing meant; the writers on the opposing side, seeming to me to have little conception of any other. But though *I* could not reconcile Dr. T. to himself in this case, I took it for granted that *he* could; and if you will please to look over the postscript again (though possibly such an inference might be drawn, by a man who would frame an hypothesis from my general words) you will see I have made all possible allowances for Dr. T's. situation, and concerned myself much more with the bishop of D. (for whom, I do not even suppose him to be answerable) than with Dr. T.——But now, more directly to the point.

Dr. T. then, joins issue with me as to the method of trying the excellency of human institutions; but when he comes to apply this test to our church, he seems to me to state the case wrong. He supposes the church to be *thwarted* and *counteracted* by another institution, (the civil) which is so far from being the fact, that the very being of the church of England depends upon her conforming to, and acting in conjunction with the state. In a state of detachment from the civil powers, the church of En-

gland is neither capable of, nor calculated to produce any good at all; for, in such a state, she would actually cease to *be*. So far therefore, as the influence of the civil government is an obstruction to that of the church, of E. it is an error in the first concoction, a defect in the original constitution, which cannot be amended, otherwise than by framing her whole mass *de novo*. It is no accidental grievance, it is a *malum stamen* in her vitals, which is utterly incurable.

Accordingly, Dr. Tucker, to illustrate and support his case, is obliged to have recourse to an impossible supposition, *viz.* That of our Saviour's coming on earth to settle and model a *national* church, which I will venture to say he could not do, without contradicting the principles of the gospel he hath already left us. A *national* church without secular and political connexions, is a mere chimera. Such connexions our Saviour disavowed, and therefore can never be supposed to come a second time to contravene his own acts and doctrines.

If it should be said that our Saviour might come and leave the model of a church, national or otherwise, without concerning himself with secular institutions, I answer, *that* case has already happened. He hath modeled such a church, without any connexion with the civil powers.—But can he be said to have *let* affairs be conducted upon *our* civil plan, or any other like unto it? Very far from it.

Our writers on civil government indeed, especially since the revolution, have laid it down as an incontestible fact, that our blessed Lord left men free to frame such modes of civil

government, as were most suitable to their particular interests, circumstances, and situation.

Alas, no such matter. Our Saviour's religion lays particular obligations upon every individual who professes it, lawgivers as well as others; and a legislature composed of individuals, under the sense and influence of those obligations could no more enact a multiplication of oaths, or open a way to the propagation of drunkenness and lewdness by gin-acts, &c. than it could enact circumcision or sacrifice. Our blessed Saviour's religion, prescribes under the severest sanctions what men OUGHT to be, and makes a conforming practice the indispensible condition of their being true christians, or real members of his church.

But is this the case of the church of England? I appeal to bp. Hoadley himself, in his Reasonableness of Conformity, who says expressly, "that ecclesiastical establishments must now "be conformed to what the world *is*, not to "what it *ought* to be." Whence it plainly follows, that if the world degenerate ever so much, the ecclesiastical establishment must follow the fashion, and upon these hopeful principles it is, that he would defend the blemishes of the church of England.

To go from the rule to the practice. In what one instance has the church of England counteracted this licentiousness, or even of the civil powers in her public capacity, borne her testimony against it? Yet she has her representatives in the houses of legislature, not one of whom, that ever I heard of, brought any arguments on the behalf of the church, when those

laws were in agitation, which introduced these disorders? Observe, I say, on the behalf of the *church*, whose influence I am now considering as an human institution. On the other hand, you may find churchmen, and, for ought I know, bishops, who are ready to defend every measure of the government, without ever once supposing that any of them was contrary to the rules, ordinances, or doctrines of the church, or indeed without any person dreaming of making any such objection to them.

The next thing Dr. T. says, is that "if the "judgment concerning the goodness of the "church, must be taken from the lives of its "professors, it would seem to follow, &c." This, I think, I have some reason to complain of, because, having proposed to review the church of England, not by the system of any other church, but that of Christ, as the plan is laid down in the scriptures, I cannot be supposed to take upon myself, the *defence* of any other *human* establishment, though I might be of opinion, that other constitutions might, upon the comparison, be better than our own, and bring the lives of their professors to prove it. —But, however, I will not turn my back on the cause, but answer to the Dr's. instances particularly.

By the French church, I suppose, he means the church established in *France;* and here I must acknowledge my ignorance of the fact, for which he appeals with some confidence to you. That point then, I leave to your decision. But I know so much of popery, as to know farther, that whoever is a good christian in France, or elsewhere, is not a good papist; and

as it happens I have a fact equally certain, at least with Dr. T's. to prove it. It is acknowledged on all hands, that the most serious and pious people in France, are, and have been for some years past, *Jansenists*. The common people are so, for the greater part at this time. And no body knows better than Dr. T. that the distinguishing principles of jansenism, are the very same with those, upon which our reformation was founded: besides, would it turn out to the honour of the church of England, if it should prove, upon examination, the church of France was actually better constituted for such influence upon society? We shall see presently, what presumptions there are of this sort.

The character Dr. Tucker gives of the dissenters in London and Bristol, is to me both new and strange. All I know is, that the case is very different in *all* the places where I have been long enough to make observations of that sort, and where the principles of our respective sects may be supposed to have their most genuine influence. But be this as it may, it is well known that from the beginning it was not so, as is manifest by the name of *Puritans*, given to the dissenters at first; and as the principles of those people are what they always were, or at least have never been qualified by civil dispensations, they remain still entire, to convict these transgressors of their irregularity, which I humbly apprehend is not the case of the church of England. And I have known some very eminent persons, among our divines, contending with much warmth for the rectitude of

these kill-time diversions, and indeed of every thing else which is not within the precise letter of the decalogue. The consequence is, that these vicious dissenters desert their principles; the rakes of the church do not. We cannot but suppose that there are rules of discipline, in dissenting congregations, which, if they were exercised, would reduce these offenders to order; but the dissenters being without the sanction of civil authority, can inforce their discipline no farther, than it is the option of the offender to submit to it; if, therefore, a man is not so disposed, and the dissenters should actually proceed to exclude him from communion, as he would, by this, lose nothing of his civil rights, so neither would he of his religious estimation among his countrymen at large. For he very well knows, who would take him in, and Dr. T. knows, that if, with all his debaucheries, this excluded dissenter should offer himself in the church of England as a communicant, either in the character of a proselyte, or as a qualifyer for preferment, it is above a million to an unit, that he would not be rejected. It is the common weakness of all churchmen, to be ambitious of gaining and keeping *numbers* in their respective communions, without sufficient regard to the morals of their members. When, therefore, the church of England is so ready to receive all who come to her most sacred offices with open arms, what wonder that there should be a relaxation of discipline among the dissenters, which, however, in the present case, is to be put to the account of the church of England.

Again, where did these kill-time diversions and scandalous debaucheries begin? Not among the dissenters. No, however, some of these may have improved upon the plan, it was chalked out for them, and even executed by their orthodox brethren of the established church. Here then we have precisely the case supposed by the late bishop of Durham. The French protestants are of the same church and principles with the largest, and probably the most vicious body of our dissenters. The latter have been corrupted by the churchmen of Britain. The former, by virtue of their wanting such examples, and yet adhering to their genuine principles, remain innocent. What need I more to justify all the conclusions I have drawn in the postscript from the bishop's state of the case.

The christianity of new England was probably taught and introduced at the first, by such refugees as fled from the face of the established church. Since when, however, it is well known, new England has partaken of the charity of our propagating society; and a learned bishop, in a famous sermon, hath informed the public, that if these poor creatures would be taught christianity at the expence of the society, they must be taught it as it is professed in the church of England.—His lordship says, indeed, that it is better to have it *so* taught, than not taught at all—perhaps it may, but if the christianity (so called) is introduced into these countries, should be even worse than the ancient paganism, it might be worth the while to inquire to what church, or churchmen of what denomi-

nation it might be owing; and it is well if the church of England may wholly be acquitted.

The question then still recurs, how came all this licentiousness to prevail over the influence of the church, which, according to many writers of the best note, was established with this express view, that it might not prevail. To say that the church has been counteracted by the civil powers, is not the fact, as we have seen. The church has, from time to time, concurred in all the civil and political measures of the government, and concurreth in them even to this hour. Is not then the consequence, that the church never could have exerted her own proper influence, unless she had broke off from her alliance with the state, or, in other words, had ceased to be established. But we shall probably see more of this as we go along. Let us attend to this worthy person's second head of reflections.

II. "The church of England never did arrogate to itself the plea of infallibility, but "I will freely own it did as bad, *viz.* set up for "an intolerance in religious matters." *Did as bad!* Nay, ten times worse, for by this means the church of England became inconsistent with herself, and in some sort obliged the civil power to bring her into order, and to cover her miserable nakedness by a temporal law. But the church which claimed infallibility and stuck to it, grew as we have seen to a degree of dignity and power, which left her no occasion for dependence upon the civil power; she was therefore in no danger of being drawn into the vortex of corruption, by state-influence. All her corruptions are the genuine

fruits of the church alone. But, however, this circumstance in the constitution of the popish church, gives her this advantage over the english, that she can exert her influence over the people uncontrouled by civil prohibitions, &c. which may probably account for that external appearance of better morals in France, at least than in England. But this by the way of supplement to what is above.

Dr. Tucker asks, but did not all other sectaries, and all other churches, whether calvinist or lutheran do the same? Very true; but did I undertake to defend the intolerance of those churches, or will this recrimination acquit the church of England? Many of these intolerant sectaries were not established in the countries where they set up, and where that was the case, they could neither inflict any penalties, nor restrain dissenters from chusing another communion, and so far they were less criminal than intolerant churches that were established. It is no matter who led the way to toleration, or from what principles it took its rise. If it may be proved to be a right measure, and that too by scripture arguments, it should have been adopted by all protestant churches from the beginning, as scripture *alone* was the foundation upon which they pretended to be built.

But as we are now upon the subject of toleration, I cannot but express my desire to see upon what texts of scripture the arguments for a toleration, as distinguished from an establishment, are grounded? For my own part, I have examined the new testament over and over, and I could never discover in it any sort

of toleration, which was not *mutual.* In other words, I never could find the least authority for an exclusive establishment in the whole book. I plainly perceive that all churches, founded by the apostles, did not act by one invariable rule, and yet I cannot find that the preference is given to any one. On the other hand, the apostles find fault with them all, and with some in particular for intolerance, and the remedy prescribed is a mutual indulgence, for which the apostle plainly supposes, they would all have occasion in their turn. If, from hence, you go to the reason of the thing, an establishment founded upon penalties or exclusive privileges, is the absurdest thing in nature, but upon the supposition of absolute infallibility. Why should I be punished or excluded, for not believing a thing, which they who punish or exclude me, do not certainly and infallibly know to be true. On the other hand, if they know the thing to be certainly and infallibly true, nothing can be more wicked than to tolerate the belief of the contrary, which they must know to be certainly and infallibly false. When I used to read the pleas which great men have made for toleration, I often thought, that considering the equity of the case, there was a surprising weakness in some parts of the argument, the reason of which, I was a long time in finding out. At length I perceived that the unsound part of the reasoning, was owing to the concessions made in favour of establishments, which had indeed the very same effect upon the argument, as a concession in favour of infallibility would have. In the beginning of the Dutch refor-

mation, it was declared in a synod at Embden, that all churches were co-ordinate. I believe they had then no canons before them, but those of the new testament:—but when they got confessions, and the magistrates to back them, they found out the means to make new and better canons, for their own ends at least.

Dr. Tucker seems to be at a loss for my meaning, when I speak "of the church of "England *suffering* her members to become "so corrupt,"—and thinks I allude to *coercive powers*, (of which I have not said a single word) but cannot suppose that I intend to annex civil penalties to church censures, which, "saith he," is the height of popery.

But had the Dr. been pleased to look back, he might have observed that I *intended* nothing but the means of edifying and reforming the people, which the clergy actually have in their hands, whatever they may be. These means, I suppose, to be sufficient for the purpose, and I suppose likewise, that they are paid by the state, for employing these means to the best advantage. The fact is, that the people are extremely corrupt and wicked; or, in other words, unedified and unreformed. Now if the means of edifying and reforming the people in the hands of the clergy, are *sufficient* for the purpose, the corruption of the people seems to be a plain proof, that the means are *not employed*, and, in that case, I think it may be said, that the church or the clergy, *suffer* the people to become corrupt or wicked. This, Dr. T. would insinuate, they cannot help. I would then ask, why are they established; and have a valuable consideration paid for what they cannot

perform? Is it honourable for the church in particular, that the christian communion should be despised and undervalued in the manner he represents, and that the clergy themselves should be made the instruments of bringing it into contempt? "Without such coercive "powers, says Dr. T. that is, civil penalties, "things must go on by means of persuasion "only, not compulsion."—Would Dr. T. be understood to say, that the clergy have not *coercive powers* in their hands?—What then shall we call the fines and mulcts in our spiritual courts, the penances, commutations, excommunications, and imprisonments, in consequence of that, which though not applicable at present to heterodox opinions, are daily made use of towards a *supposed* reformation of manners; and if all these joined to the method of persuasion, cannot be made to operate to a reformation, or rather to prevent an almost total corruption,—once more, why is this church established, and for this very purpose at so great an expence to the public? Might not both the money and the men, be employed to much better purpose?

"And we must not quarrel, adds the Dr. "with this which is the natural and necessary "effect of such causes, as are good in the main. "The sun produces fevers."

Yea, but the fevers produced by the sun, are not to the sun's salutary effects in the proportion of one to ten thousand.

By this last clause, I presume the doctor to mean that the disorders in our people's morals, are the *natural* and *necessary* effects of the cler-

gy's having no other means in their hands of reforming them, but those of persuasion.

Now here we differ widely; I have the misfortune to have that high opinion of the efficacy of the gospel of Christ, as to believe that where it is preached with proper assiduity and in sincerity, though without any other advantages than those which naturally arise from the importance of its contents, and by men who are living examples of what they preach, and these men again, no more in number than the present ministers, paid for that purpose in the church of England:—I say, I am so persuaded of the efficacy of the gospel, that I cannot but think it would be too hard for even the deluges of vice among us, in the circumstances abovementioned. But if upon enquiry it should be found, that things are in quite another train, that the gospel is in many places not preached at all, in more doctrines, preached for gospel which are not gospel, that a vast majority of the preachers are men as foreign in their lives, and conversation, to the characters they bear, as darkness is to light, and many of them a scandal to the doctrine they do, or should preach, &c. &c.—As I cannot, in such a case wonder at the licentiousness of the people, or even at the contempt with which the gospel is treated, so neither can I tell where to lay the blame, but on the church, which sends out and tolerates such ministers. For this is a case at least, in which the state does not interpose, and where if the men were what they should be, I cannot suppose the civil powers would interfere with them at all. If the state indeed throws out its baits, and proposes its emoluments upon

lower and quite different conditions than these, and thereby fosters a spirit of ambition and avarice in the clergy, destructive of these good fruits of their labours, the state is so far neither wise nor good, but the church is neither wiser nor better in being caught by such baits, which surely she is under no *natural* or *necessary* compulsion to swallow.

"It is sometimes said, that the church is too "strait laced in its articles and subscriptions." This the worthy Dr. allows, but thinks it is full as bad in all other bodies of christians in the world.

Very far from it I can assure him, to my certain knowledge. But not to enter into long details, I will suppose it to be so, with respect to *some* test insisted on in all churches. But here lies the disadvantage to the church of England. In other churches, the ministers believe what they subscribe, or at least are allowed to deliver in a confession of their faith, drawn up by themselves, by which it is clearly understood what they *do* believe; and the very instance brought by Dr. T. viz. the desertion of pastors by their flocks, when they preach contrary to the received doctrine, proves this to be so.—But how is it in the church of England? Why many a poor creature is admitted to subscribe in positive terms, to a set of doctrines which they know nothing of; many more subscribe without believing them, many others subscribe, neither because they do or do not understand or believe them, but merely because their livelyhood depends upon it. It will perhaps be said, that this belongs merely to the conscience and sincerity of the subscri-

ber, and is not to be imputed to the church as the imposer. But surely it must be imputed to the church, that she permits this measure still to continue as a snare to the consciences of simple, as well as insincere men. In the mean time, the church cannot be ignorant that many, even a majority of these subscribers, preach openly and publicly, such doctrines as expressly contradict the articles they have subscribed; yet is she silent and passive under so great a scandal, and under an instance of prevarication so notorious and so frequent, as seems to sanctify such elusion of oaths among the common people, as is too notorious, and is too frequently complained of.—So that I am afraid the Dr's. instance of a *voluntary* club, will not reach the case to which he would apply it. It is plain, by the circumstances above, that the churches subscription is *not* voluntary, and that if that matter were left free, and at the option of the subscriber, so that he could enjoy his preferment without subscribing, perhaps not one in ten would subscribe of those who are under the alternative of *subscribe or no benefice!*

As to the club itself, Dr. T. says, that it should have *some* rules and orders, seems to him to be the natural and necessary order of things. Perhaps this worthy person will be surprised to be told, that it is not essential to christianity, that there should be any club at all, and least he should take a position of this kind, for a whim of my own, I will give it you in the words of a Rev. Dr. by no means to be suspected of low churchism. "Those *particulars* who re-
"ceived the word, became not necessarily
"from the simple nature and genius of the

" faith, members of any community, but of " the spiritual kingdom of God. And though " for the better conveyance of the glad tidings " of the gospel, it was *expedient* that the dis- " ciples of Christ should be formed into a kind " of sociality, yet the founder of our holy " faith, never intended this or *any* other reli- " gious society, to be part of its *essentials.*" This we think fit to say, when we are battling the church of *Rome*; but when the defence of our own establishment is upon the carpet, we make no scruple to contradict it, changing only the word *essential*, for the word *fundamental;* which may help you to understand the curious distinction mentioned by Dr. T. below, of which more in its place.

Now, I would hope, that the good Dr. will allow me to say, that whatever is the natural and necessary order of things in *other* clubs, a club of christians are not so absolutely volunteers, but that they must take care not to adopt any rules or orders, for which they have not their master's express authority.—But is this the case with respect to our articles or subscriptions, or any other human tests whatsoever? Our arguments against them therefore, are not drawn from the abuse of a good institution, but levelled at the institution itself, as an abuse *a fundamentis*, and capable of no correction but that of a total abolition.

Bp. Hoadly represents this trimming between the romish and the english *club*, thus: " There " are some professed christians, who contend " openly for such an authority, as indispensa- " bly obliges all around them—to profess even " what they do not, what they cannot believe

" to be true. This sounds so grossly, that " others, who think they act a glorious part in " opposing such an enormity, are very willing " *for their own sakes*, [the interests of the pre- " siding members of the club] to retain such " an authority as shall oblige men, whatever " they themselves think, though not to pro- " fess what they do not believe, yet to forbear " the profession and publication of what they " do believe, let them believe it of never so " great importance.*—Which of them is the " most insupportable to an honest and a chris- " tian mind, I am not able to say."

I leave the reconciliation of all this with the reasonableness of conformity, &c. to whom it may concern. [Observing only that the man who was capable of writing this forty years ago, and capable of re-publishing it not quite three years since, was, during that whole interval, and is still capable of exercising one, perhaps both of these usurped authorities derived to him—not by any commission from Christ assuredly.]

III. Dr. Tucker seems next to tack two things together, which lie at a great distance from each other in my papers, if indeed the latter of them lie there at all. For I did not say that the advantages accruing to the clergy from the alliance, had been increasing from queen Elizabeth's days. What I did say, I shall presently explain and prove.

* This relates more immediately to thoſe, who would ſoften or *unlace* our ſubſcriptions, by calling our confeſſion, *articles of peace*, not to be contradicted; but probably the biſhop glanced likewiſe at the *promiſe* ſubſtituted in the church of *Geneva*, in lieu of ſubſcription, concerning which, Dr. Tucker ſeems not to be rightly informed.

Dr. T. I suppose, will not deny that there is an actual alliance between church and state, and that the church receives very considerable advantages from this alliance; nor will he deny that these advantages are the valuable consideration paid by the state, for the clergy's endeavours to propagate religion, and consequently virtue, good morals, and good order among the people.

As to *proportions*, I shall not interpose my judgment. They are sufficiently out of rule and measure, to require a reformation upon political principles. But this I will judge, that the clergy may if they so please, set themselves out of the reach of contempt as well as envy, by expedients, quite independent of any considerations of their temporal income. I do not know what great man would envy a *truly* humble, laborious, hospitable bishop, even though his annual income should amount to thousands. Nor do I know who would contemn such a bishop, who should ride about his diocese on horseback, preaching and promoting faith, piety, and an holy conversation, though he was reduced to his pad nag, merely because his income would not pay for a coach and six.

Bad as the world is, it can yet distinguish so far as not to confound real merit and demerit, I mean so far as to do justice to each, in passing a verbal sentence, though it may be backward to proceed to a farther recompence. And I know some clergymen in the world of no low rank, whom all the honours and preferments that can be heaped upon them, would not rescue from the contempt of every one ac-

quainted with their character, and the way of life by which they purchase that character.

I never said that the clergy are now comparatively richer than in the time of queen Elizabeth. My words are these:—

"We have been from the days of queen Elizabeth, departing still farther and farther from the original plan of reformation; edging by imperceptible degrees, still nearer and nearer popery, particularly by fostering the ambition, ease, and opulence of the clergy, and thereby giving, &c."

The original plan of the reformation, was to keep close to the scriptures, both in doctrines and in forming the exterior of the church; and I would here be understood to speak of queen Elizabeth's days, inclusively, during which, some pretty large strides were made backward from the reformation, as king Edward left it. And yet the martyr'd bishops in queen Mary's days, when they came to die, thought that even then, they had mixed too much of human policy in their religious establishment; as may be seen in that very affecting dialogue between Ridley and Latimer, which is preserved in Fox's book of martyrs, and intituled, *Antonianus*. And Latimer, even in the days of Edward, scrupled not to call our religion, a *mingle mangle*. How we have gone on since, I may take occasion to observe below; in the mean time, let us consider the state of the clergy.

In the days of queen Elizabeth, we find bishops indeed remiss enough, but yet in general, neither so much at court, nor so much or so long out of their dioceses, as at this time of the

day. Translations and commendams were at least less frequent then, than now. And to pre-engage, or influence the votes of bishops in parliament, by throwing out the lure of preferment, was as far as my searches have gone, a thing unheard of in those days. Dr. Tucker hath mentioned pluralities, as more notorious and greater grievances, in some reigns backward, than now. But that case stood thus. These enormous pluralists were few, perhaps not exceeding six at a time in the whole kingdom; and suppose there might be ten men in the kingdom who held six livings apiece, and all, or the very most of the rest of the clergy single beneficed, what are these to the benefices now held in plurality? Besides we know, that the sloth, oppressions, encroachments, and other exorbitances of the clergy, were then looked upon with an evil eye. Particular bishops often reproved by statesmen, and called to a particular account for their misbehaviour, and very frequently complained of in parliament. The clergy may not perhaps be proportionably richer now, than they were then, but the present age is doing all it can, that this venerable body shall have no reason to complain of it in time coming: which is all that I meant by *fostering their opulence.* For example, in the days of Elizabeth, if the queen or a favourite cast a longing eye over a bishop's manour, means were found to bring him to terms of exchange, which were far from being a valuable consideration. But where do we hear of such doings now a days. If a great man would have the least snip of the churches patrimony, he must go to the parliament, be at the expence

of an act, and pay perhaps near a double equivalent. I could give a strong instance of this not yet four years old, where a bishop by giving up what seldom amounted to 50l. a year, obtained for himself and his successors not less than 200l. But for an indisputable proof, appeal we to the tenths and first fruits settled upon the clergy in perpetuity, and in such sort as to be daily adding to the real estate of the church. In the year 1754, the capital of this fund amounted to 333,000l. a great part of which, all I mean which is not distributed by lot, should be reckoned double, because it requires an equal sum to be raised, in order to obtain it; the whole of which accumulating treasure, is appropriated to the purchase of lands settled upon the church for ever, and in the strongest and most irrevocable manner; and which, in a course of years, will throw into the hands of the church a much greater landed property, than the popish church had at the dissolution of monasteries, and if not restrained in due time, may vest the whole land of the kingdom in the church. So indulgent a mother was queen Anne, to her orthodox sons, and so obedient and awed are the lay children of the church, that not one of them has since dared to open his mouth against this prodigious acquisition lopped off from the crown, and by consequence for ever lost to the necessities of the state, to which, however, some people think it might be applied with more propriety, because with more utility, and that the church may very well content herself with the fair por-

tion, that in a course of fifty years has been gathering for her.

In the mean time we hear many complaints, that the inferior clergy are poorly, that is insufficiently provided for: what rule then shall we lay down, to ascertain the proportion of worldly means, that go to a sufficient maintenance? For my part, I know but of *one*, which it is proper for a christian clergy to regard, viz. *having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.* Aye, but a clergyman is expected to make a figure, and be at considerable expences, according to his station, &c. Pray what do you mean by *making a figure;* explain yourself: is it some sort of figure different from what is mentioned in the ordination office? If you mean making a figure in elegant life, dress, entertainments, &c. who are they that expect this? Who requires it at your hands; not *Jesus*, not *Paul.* And pray, to whom are you to give your last account, to the men who expect this figure from you, or to God who does not? Or can you in good earnest make this figure, without omitting to make what is, or should be your proper figure? If the *church* requires it, or the interests thereof, as distinguished from the real interests of christianity, why will you not allow us to put this among her spots and blemishes, for assuredly she deviates so far from the church of Christ.—You say that tradesmen, master-coopers, &c. can make a better figure than you, and some of them amass their thousands, who can neither write nor read true english. Alas, for pity, that the children of this world should be wiser in their generation, than the children of light.—But,

be ingenuous and speak your conscience; would you really wish to be in possession of those thousands, with all the guilt upon your mind of that oppressive and iniquitous traffic, by which they have been got together? Do you really think that every man ought to be at liberty to make the most of every advantage and opportunity he has of getting money? How many of these prosperous blockmakers, &c. do you know, who do *not* think so? And if you think so too, you have reason to lament that the trade of a parson is not so good as other trades. Are such complaints *decent* in the mouths of clergymen? And yet from whom are they more frequent than from clergymen, who, however, from their appearance, seem to want no manner of thing that is good. Go to a visitation dinner, what do you hear relative to the clergy, but remarks upon good preferments and better preferments. Who is to have the next living, and what it is worth. Is not all this in the way of trade? And ought you to be scandalized that infidels and profane laymen treat your profession as a trade, when a large majority of your own order do the very same. What a scene might be opened, if one was at liberty to descend to particulars, and shew, not by one or two, but multitudes of instances, how these inferior clergy, who are so poorly provided for, spend the time and the money they have already! Is it presumeable that if they had more they would spend it better? Let us then for shame cease these complaints, seeing that indeed they amount to nothing more or less, than that we are not sufficiently accommodated with the good things of

this life, or cannot afford to be so idle, wicked, luxurious, knavish, debauched, and every way as sensual as our happier brethren of the laity. Should we that should be the light of the world, and the salt of the earth, repine that we have not our reward in this life? These are the earnings of those, who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and have no savour of life in them; and it is our especial business, instead of running with them in a race of corruption and death, to shew unto them a more excellent way, the narrow way which leadeth unto life,—the way of humility, patience, fortitude, resignation, and contentment. I therefore do lament, and while it continues, ever will lament, that my brethren suffer themselves to be so much amused and deluded with the charms of worldly power, and worldly wealth, and worldly ease, which the people love to throw in their way, to stop *their* mouths who should bear an open and noble testimony against their corruptions.

IV. The good Dr. is ingenuous enough to confess, that there is yet too much of the persecuting leaven still left among the clergy (too much undoubtedly if any at all) but thinks it is dying away by degrees, which is no bad news if it be true. But he must excuse me from thinking that the instances he has brought to prove the declension of this evil spirit, come up to the point. No such sect as the methodists ever appeared among us before, since the toleration act. And that wholesome law was provided as Dr. Jortin observes, by the civil, not the ecclesiastical powers, *to prevent our doing one* another any bodily harm. "But the

bishops did not call upon the civil powers, on this occasion." They did wisely. They were very sure the civil powers would not pay the least regard to any such solicitation. "Farther than this they did not make use of those powers on this occasion belonging to them by the constitution." However, I know *one* case where this was done, and the cause brought to sentence, and where, I have been told, the dissenters interposed to prevent the execution of it; pleading, that as they had a discipline among themselves, and as the dissenters had on this occasion lent the methodists their names, in licensing their house of worship, they should look upon it as an infringement of the toleration act, if the ecclesiastical court proceeded farther, whatever the canons may import. And I myself know several methodist tabernacles entered at the sessions, some in the names of presbyterians, others in the names of quakers, who never see the inside of them, and this to secure themselves from persecutions, with which they have been threatened by the church of England clergy. It is not yet a year and an half since a vicar of York minster, was presented by a parochial minister of that city, for frequenting a methodist meeting, and though the fact was plainly proved, and even, as I remember, to his officiating there, the judge of the court, from whom I had the account, said there was nothing in our *ecclesiastical constitution*, that would render the party obnoxious to church censures. And indeed as this *constitution* is merely *canonical*, so far as the exercise of it belongs to the bishops, I believe their lordships are very willing to leave it in that

problematical state, in which it has existed for many years backwards, especially since the attorney general's, (now lord Hardwick's,) arguments in the case of a church-warden's oath, have convinced the world how precarious that power is with respect to civil constitution principles.—For the rest, how the methodists have been treated by church of England, orthodox mobs, cannot be unknown to Dr. T. nor is it unknown to you that in Whitefield's late case, the sense of the mob, was the sense of a

How bishops have treated the methodists in common discourse, I have been an ear-witness myself; viz. with language not only below the episcopal dignity, but even inconsistent with common decency: in which, to my knowledge, they have been followed with great zeal, by our brethren, from the chaplain to the country curate. And it is not yet eight months since I heard such invectives against them from the pulpit, on a very public occasion, by a dignitary of high rank, as put many to the blush who never pretended to be their friends. All the world knows of a dirty pamphlet, which a certain prelate set out against J. Wesley.—As to the case of the dissenters, all the bishops and all divines of sense, know what *witholdeth* their hands from clawing the unqualified dissenters; and I can assure the Dr. that some attempts were made upon the late Dr. Foster, which made him open his mouth in a public coffee-house, in a very remarkable oration, after which he was easy for the rest of his life. Besides the cause here insinuated, there is another better known. The subscribing dissenters, have been

allowed by the justices, either to premise forms of their own, or else have subscribed in the very terms of the Act, 43. Elizabeth. To the latter privilege, the divines of the church are as legally intituled as the dissenters. And I believe our *ministerial imposers* of subscription (who were never supposed to want cunning) had much rather the dissenting clergy should not subscribe at all, than their own clergy should be in danger of being seduced by so inconvenient a precedent. Some justices have been dealt with by some bishops, to come into the canonical form, who in some instances have prevailed, but in others, they have found more rational magistrates a little untractable: I could add more upon this subject, if it was not too delicate for a thorough discussion; and only desire to ask Dr. Tucker, what he thinks would be the consequence of our bishops attempting to execute the penal laws against such dissenters as are obnoxious to them; and whether he does not believe the bishops are apprised of that consequence.

"The clergy, says the worthy Dr. are much "come off *of late* from their bigotted anathe-"matizing spirit."—*Of late*, indeed, if so it is, for instances, which might otherwise, perhaps, be called *recent*, may be appealed to, which seem to denote that this spirit was cultivated *not long ago*, with as much assiduity as ever. There was hardly a treatise wherein Dr. Middleton's *Free Inquiry* was opposed, where the Dr. and his adherents were not reminded of their contravening their subscriptions. The same spirit more illustriously flaming in the writers against the Disquisitions. The bishop

of Clogher, and Dr. Carter, have remarkably felt the effects of it; and more lately still, the only two pamphlets which have yet professedly appeared in opposition to Dr. *Law's* appendix, to the last edition of his *Considerations* on *religion*, have imputed to him, the one *socinianism*, the other the guilt of Ananias and Sapphira, for going against his subscriptions.—As to the instance appealed to by the Dr. I must confess my ignorance. I do not understand the distinction between the *fundamentals of religion*, and the *essentials to salvation*; and I grievously suspect there is a lurking fallacy in that distinction, which the good Dr. is not aware of. If these *fundamentals* respect the private and personal religion of individuals, they must be the same things with, and consequently as variable as the *essentials* to salvation. And for this I appeal to the renowned Chillingworth, who replies to his adversary, calling for a catalogue of fundamentals, that he might as well require a coat to fit the moon, or a dial calculated for all meridians. It remains then, that these invariable fundamentals, must be the fundamentals of public religion, *alias* the fundamentals of a visible church, which must imply, that an adherence to such fundamentals is indispensable wherever they are *known*; and accordingly, these essentials to salvation are allowed to be *relative* only to cases of *ignorance*, *incapacity*, want of *opportunity*, &c. that is, to cases where such fundamentals cannot be had. On any other supposition, the distinction is nonsense, and would have been so treated by Clarke, Ralgay, Foster, Taylor, &c. who, however by the way, had *their* invariable funda-

mentals too, *viz.* An universal light of nature, of which they made much the same use as Waterland, Chapman, Wheatly, &c. made of church fundamentals. And the *fundamentals of religion*, being an equivocal term, I do not wonder that it served for the foundation of a coalition, from which none were excluded, but those who stuck to the genuine gospel of Christ in opposition to *both*. And this indeed is the true solution of that paradox, advanced by the never failing Dr. Warburton, *viz.* That a church establishment is a principle of natural religion.

V. The learned Dr. having given up the late bishop of Durham so frankly, I shall not add one word more upon that subject. Be his failings buried in oblivion, and his virtues shine before men to the glory of God, and the edification of his surviving brethren, to whom in some things he left a better example, than some of them have hitherto followed.

The free and candid Disquisitions, I saw in Mss, at least a great part of them before they were communicated to the public; but had not the least concern in the first volume, and only wrote a single letter, inserted in the 2d. of the two appeals which followed them. Both the disquisitions and appeals, are now certainly known to be the *compilation* of one single man, who solicited sentiments and rescripts from different quarters, and from men of very different sorts and professions, who were entirely strangers to each other, and who therefore cannot be supposed to have had any *concerted* views, save the single one of amending the liturgy. If the Dr. supposes them to have had any oblique or sinister views, as *a body*, I should not doubt

but to convince him to the contrary, if he would explain himself. What views the compiler (who was likewise the editor) might have of the *indirect* sort, he best knows himself. I have had at least one hundred letters from him, and never could discover any views in him, but that single one of advancing the honour and interests of pure unadulterated christianity. Perhaps, if this should be the same man who corresponded with Dr. T. the Dr. may impute to him *arian* or *socinian* views, but I can assure the Dr. that when that person first undertook the disquisitions, he was as orthodox in those points, as any of us; as will readily appear to any one who will compare what is said concerning the athanasian creed, in the 1st. and 2d. editions of those same disquisitions. I believe he altered his sentiments *afterwards*. But *his* after-views, whatever they might be, ought not to be imputed to the *original* design of the disquisitions; which I will own were upon a plan which I (as well as Dr. T.) think was too *narrow*, but *narrow* in a different way. And with respect to the matter of fact, mentioned by the Dr. I would only beg of him to recollect, whether the *complaisance* objected to was not really and in truth such a *complaisance* to the athanasians, as the disquisitor very well knew the arians and socinians, or one of them at least could *not* join in. I know something of the story, and am sorry to say that I am afraid it is not candidly represented. I am likewise sorry to find this worthy gentleman giving into that *low* piece of *high* church cunning, of imputing bad views to the espousers

of a cause, to the intrinsic merits of which there can be no just or reasonable objection.

For instead of their multiplying objections to the liturgy, they have hardly pointed out a tenth part of such as might be made, and have been made by other hands. I will mention one to a doctrine which stands in the front of our daily service, and which I think no serious man, after a moment's consideration, will allow to be *true* doctrine. It is said expressly in the *exhortation*, "That we ought *most chiefly* to confess our sins to God, when we assemble and meet together." If this be true, it must be a greater duty to confess that we are sinners in general, than to acknowledge our particular transgressions in private; and by what scripture our liturgists would prove this proposition, I cannot imagine. It is plain they have made no sort of provision for the sinner's confessing his peculiar sins in the assembly. I know those who make a practical use of this doctrine, and alledge, that if they do but make the *more material* confession in public, they may well dispense with themselves on other occasions. All this, however, is for the honour of the church!

But for once let us admit the disquisitions have been too minute: why are not the *grosser faults* amended? Do the disquisitions stand in the way of that? Does it follow that because some men have accused the church, where she is not guilty, that therefore she is under no obligation to reform where she is?—And here again comes in the *competent knowledge of mankind.* For heaven's sake what has this knowledge to do in a question that concerns reformation upon christian principles? Is it

not sufficient what preachers of the christian religion *know* what *mankind* ought to be? *If I yet please men, I am not the servant of Christ.* Our blessed Saviour *knew what was in man*, what was the use he proposed to make of this knowledge. Was it to accommodate his doctrines to the taste and temper of the world? Or rather to send his truths home to the hearts he thus knew, with the greater force and precision. If the disquisitors proposed to alter any thing, so that it should not be in perfect agreement with those truths, they are so far to be condemned; but I insist upon it, *that* is the only criterion by which they ought to be tried at any *christian* bar in the world. Indiscretion in a righteous cause, and in contradistinction to human prudence, is no crime before any tribunal where Christ is supposed to preside. And if this be all the disquisitors have to answer for, it is well enough for them. But for my part, I am but too apt to think, that these same disquisitors had but too great a knowledge of mankind, or at least acted too much upon that supposition. The whining, wheedling style, wherein they express themselves, always looked to me like a design to overtake our reverend fathers, in their own sort of craftiness. They failed indeed, greatly in their knowledge of mankind, when they supposed a convocation would or might be brought to come into a reformation of church matters of any kind; but, however, it was civil to suppose it, and the members of that body were as civil in the answer they gave them, which was by the hand of John White, the most flaming church bigot that we have had among us for some years. This man was

sent hissing hot from his controversy with the dissenters to answer the disquisitors, on which occasion, though he seemed to abate a little of his fury, in conformity to the complaisant style of his antagonists, yet did he find means to let them sufficiently understand the sense of his masters, *viz.* an utter aversion to all proposals for a reformation. And yet perhaps no man ever contributed more to shew the necessity for it, than this same White, by his inconsistency in his two defences of the church of England, the one against the dissenters, the other against the papists. I called *Mr. White* the most flaming church bigot we have had among us for some years. But I beg his pardon. I must except *Boswell* of Taunton, who wrote remarks on the disquisitions, and who, as it was said, was really out of his senses. But as *White* was a more sober zealot, and, as he intimated more than once, was employed by *authority*, may we not presume that he exhibited the true spirit of his masters, and only spoke what that venerable body really thinks? "As "much scripture as you please, but no disqui- "sitions," said a right Reverend prelate to M. P. H.—And says another prelate of the management of a certain society, with respect to the savages in foreign parts:—"Look you bre- "thren, here are bibles for you, and it is a part "of our doctrine that you cannot find true "christianity, as you ought to believe and "profess it any where else. But then be "pleased to observe, that though we are afraid "you will not understand what you read, "without some man should guide you, and "therefore provide missionaries for you, yet

"we expect that they teach you christianity, "not according to the bible, but according to "the forms of the church of England, and if "you will not learn it according to those forms, "you must not be taught it at all at our ex- "pence, and we have only to recommend it to "your consideration, whether it is better for "you, to learn it in our way, or not to learn "it at all." As to the poor savages indeed, it would not be very surprising if they should not be able to pick this sense out of what is said to them, or should not see into the iniquity of this sort of conduct. But for our prelates to hold the same language to men of learning and education, who they know must see the inconsistency of it, shews a kind of confidence in their cause, which is proof against all reason and argument, and very well justifies what Dr. T. seems to hint, that our churchmen very well know, *their civil leaders will never consent to have any such reformation made as, &c.* that is to say, any reformation at all. For what reformation may not be laid aside and disappointed upon such pretences as the worthy Doctor there mentions?

"*The dissenters must begin first.*" Have they not *begun* over and over? And to what purpose? Why to be laughed at, reviled, threatened, and almost every way mal-treated, and worse used than probably they would have been, had they sat still and never begun at all. The Dr. cannot be ignorant of what bishop Burnet says of the *management* at the Savoy conference, and the politic use that was made of drawing the dissenters in, to begin first. And what security have the prelates given to

the posterity of these men, that they shall fare better than their forefathers, if they should begin again?

"Oh, but their forefathers begun wrong!" why aye, and probably never will or can begin right, till they take their directions from the church of England: and that is to say, till they cease to be dissenters. And here Dr. T. seems to me to think that the less these people alter, the less they object to, the more striking would be their plea for non-conformity. A proposition, the proof of which seems to depend upon this, viz. that the *strong reason* and *evident necessity* he mentioned, have no reference to the consciences or the sentiments of the dissenters, but solely to the honour and interests of the church of England, and consequently, that the *honest* and *sensible* christians appealed to on this occasion, must all of them be staunch members of that communion. Had the heroes of the church of England, made it appear beyond all reasonable dispute that the dissenters had departed too far from the plan of the church, something might be said for Dr. T's. proposals. But so far from this, that some churchmen of no ordinary abilities and eminence, have been ashamed of, and given up their own champions. A circumstance by the way, which will help us to account for that dead silence on the part of the church, which has been observed with respect to some excellent pamphlets very lately published: and which I need not mention to you.

"If the dissenters *will* not begin, the church cannot." What hinders the church? It should

seem, by Dr. T's. concessions above, that churchmen themselves see *strong reason* and *evident necessity* for altering *some* things. Be these more or fewer, the same *reason* and *necessity* for altering them will subsist, whoever begins. And why should not this be the church? Let us suppose our most and right Rev. fathers convinced by these strong reasons of this evident necessity for altering, &c. In this case, the alterations are to them as well as the dissenters, matter of conscience. And is it possible to imagine, that if on such conviction, they should apply to our civil leaders to have these things altered, that they would meet with a repulse? Even upon Dr. T's. hypothesis, it is their duty to try. And till they do try, there is no man of common sense will ever be persuaded that they will not succeed, upon whatever *suppositions* the case may be stated. And as things appear now, all sensible and judicious men will believe they are only kept from trying, by reasons which concern their own repose, and their own worldly prospects, rather than their want of conviction, or the impropriety of beginning.

To Dr. T's. concluding paragraph, I hardly know what to say. I would willingly hope that he wrote it in too much haste to reflect upon the shocking tendency of one of his opinions, namely, that the church of England in particular, is no otherwise answerable for the present corruption of manners, than the christian religion in general. Does Christ indulge his disciples in such corruption? And does not the church of England? Is such corruption consistent with our acceptance with, and

our adherence to Christ? And is it not consistent with our acceptance with, and our adherence to the church of England? Would Christ receive men to his ordinances, who come there with no other view but to qualify for a civil post, and who would *never* come there but on that account? But enough has been said of this before. We know very well what mischiefs an excess of liberty do to religion, but I think Dr. Tucker is too rash in asserting that the very best religion that ever existed, would be unable to counterbalance it. For how shall this be known till every weight and every obstruction laid upon this religion, be taken off it, and the religion itself be suffered to have it's free course without any unnatural incumbrance. We charge the church with laying on this incumbrance; and she has never yet acquitted herself of this charge, nor, in her present circumstances, ever can. And till these obstructions and LETTS are taken away, we may venture to presume that christianity, true, pure, genuine, and unadulterated, would have different effects on the community, than any that result from mere temporal injunctions. We grant the magistrate is highly blameable for his remissness, and the rather because he is a *christian*, in *name* at least. But *christian* or not, he might do *his* business effectually, namely, secure *external* peace and good order, without one grain of religion, of any sort. Pure religion, and undefiled, aims at what the magistrate cannot reach, the heart of man; aims not to make men simply good, but good when and where the man is secreted

from the eye of the magistrate. This is the province of the priest, or rather of the prophet, but priest or prophet, he may preach till he loses his breath without effect, if the men he preaches to observe, that instead of being himself convinced of the truths of christianity, and of walking in the narrow way he recommends to others, he indulges himself in worldly connections of the pleasurable, the ambitious, and the lucrative kind. In these connections, and in many scandalous consequences of them, the magistrate indulges him, and the church far from reproving the magistrate, thanks him and owns her high obligations to him for this indulgence. Is the efficacy of true christianity to be judged of by the fruits brought forth in such a church as this? Let no master in Israel for very shame assert such a doctrine. The priest should mend the magistrate, and instead of that, the magistrate spoils the priest; and sets him in such a light, that the people (who love well enough to have it so) imagine the priest aims to strike no deeper with the sword of the spirit, than the magistrate does with the sword of steel.

As to Dr. Tucker's sentiments, I presume not to interfere with him. Let him enjoy them in peace for me, for compulsion I abhor, nor I trust will he be able to fix a plea for it upon me, either in the postscript, or any other performance of mine. On the other hand, I say the defenders of a church, established upon civil authority, and with exclusive privileges, *must* plead for it, or give up their cause. Hunger and nakedness are in truth as *compulsory* things, as halters and whips. And as far as

my penetration reaches, the spirit of christianity is as averse from a *starving*, as a *burning*, *fining*, or *whipping* inquisition; and is not this the precise case with non-subscribing clergy? And when Dr. Tucker shall demonstrate to me how he can contrive to establish a church, that is, put it into the especial protection of the magistrate, preferably to any other church, without an inquisition of the former sort, I will then, but not till then, allow that a truly christian church may be established in his sense of the word; and what is more, that the church of England is such a church. So much for this worthy well-meaning Dr. to whose concluding prayer, I most heartily say, Amen; though I am obliged to confess that I should find neither joy nor peace, (meaning the joy and peace of the spirit) believing as he does.

P. S. I have just received an account that the late learned and pious Dr. Doddridge was prosecuted by the chancellor of the diocese for keeping an academy; that the Dr. obtained a prohibition, and was followed by the chancellor into Westminster-hall, where the Dr. obtained a complete victory over the said chancellor.

A

LETTER

TO A

FRIEND,

CONTAINING SOME REMARKS

ON

Dr. SHARPE's VISITATION CHARGES.

[FIRST PUBLISHED, MDCCXII.]

A LETTER, &c.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE read over your volume of Dr. S's. Discourses, as I would do every thing that comes from so venerable a hand, with care and attention. The learned and excellent author has no occasion for any encomiums from me, and it would be a disingenuous affectation to heap compliments upon him now, when I am going to declare myself dissatisfied with him for publishing such a performance as this, at a season when the state of religion appears to me to require some endeavours from *us* of the clergy, of a less mechanical nature than a servile conformity to rubrics and canons. Whatever opinion I may entertain of the learning and judgment which Dr. Sharp has discovered in some of his writings, and notwithstanding the high veneration which his piety, probity, and candour, in public and private life, demand from every one, I can go no farther in approving the work now before me, than barely to admit that it might, with all its imperfections, proceed from an honest and good heart, di-

rected however, in this instance, by an untimely if not an injudicious zeal.

The first reflection which occurs after the perusal of it, is that in a book consisting of sixteen discourses, addressed expressly to a christian clergy, there should be so very few references to the grand rule of their ministerial, as well as personal conduct, *the holy scriptures.* At present, I can recollect but two instances where the scriptures are appealed to in the whole book; one in the charge concerning the rubrics in the communion office, where mention is made of the case of *Judas*, with respect to unworthy communicants, and the other in the 15th. charge, page 321, where 1 Cor. xiv. is barely referred to for the meaning of the word prophecies, in the 72d. canon. There is indeed one thing that may be offered to account for this remarkable silence touching scripture authorities, and that is, that the subjects of these several discourses do not require any citations from the scriptures, and are so chosen and laid out, as to make such citations unnecessary, if not improper. But surely the worthy A. D. had the free choice of his own subjects; and it should seem to require some pains and some contrivance to chuse subjects for such occasions and such assemblies, in the treating of which an appeal to the word of God would be an impropriety.—Besides, I doubt the nature of the subjects themselves will hardly excuse this default. It is true, the Dr. professes no more than to give the clergy an account of their *legal* obligations; but as he endeavours to bind these obligations upon their *consciences*, they had reason to expect he should take some

pains to shew that the law and the gospel were in perfect agreement in the several articles, to which their obligations are said to reach.

An objection of this kind, if I mistake not, was once made to bp. Stillingfleet's Ecclesiastical Cases, which were originally visitation charges; but this was easily obviated by observing, that his lordship employed his first discourse in laying out the duties and obligations of the clergy, as they are set forth in the scriptures and primitive antiquity, by which the clergy were taught, that these were their capital directions, and that they had no occasion to lay any great stress upon any thing which interfered with them.

My next remark is on the worthy Dr's. authorities, such as *Cosins*, *Sparrow*, *Gibson*, *Heylin*, *Bennet*, *Nichols*, *Wheatley*, *Collier*, *Waterland*, and some others, who have strained every branch of ecclesiastical authority to the highest pitch, and who have been all or most of them censured, and very justly, by the wise and moderate divines of the church of *England*, for an unreasonable severity on this account. On many of the articles handled in these discourses, the good archdeacon might have had the testimonies of men equal to these, at least in point of learning and judgment, and not inferior in candour and christian charity: bishop *Fleetwood* for example, has two most excellent dissertations, the one on the judgment of the *church of England* concerning lay-baptism, the other on the canonical prayer before sermon, where I am apt to believe the Dr. might have met with some particulars worth his notice. Bishop *Fleetwood's* small pieces

indeed, were grown scarce at the time the Dr's. second charge on the baptismal rubrics was delivered; viz. 1733, but they were all collected and published four years after, viz. 1737, in one folio volume, which I remark, because the Dr. seems to say he had only seen Dr. Heylin's Discourse on the 55th canon, though bishop Fleetwood's works had then been published nine years, and have in them a great many things of great importance to the english clergy.

There is no doubt but this collection of discourses will be an acceptable present to such of the clergy, as love to style themselves *orthodox;* who commonly form their ideas of the *rectitude* of their own and other men's opinions and practices, by their conformity to ecclesiastical creeds, articles, rubrics, constitutions, and canons. It may have its use too with others, who may occasionally desire clearer information than the face of a rubric or canon exhibits at the first view; and yet I must confess for my own part, that after all the worthy Dr's. good natured pains, he hath sometimes balanced the scruple and the solution with so delicate a hand, and split the difference with such invisible nicety, that with respect to some points where I most wanted, and most desired satisfaction, I am much in the case of the man in the comedy, and apt to cry out, *probe fecisti: incertior sum multo quam dudum.*

It is indeed extremely mortifying to find so excellent a pen as Dr. *Sharpe's*, employed in this way. An attempt to reconcile certain things in our church discipline, as it now stands, with true christianity, or even with

common sense, is work only for *Lombard* or *Aquinas;* such hearts and heads as Dr. *Sharpe's*, should never be put upon this drudgery. There is nothing so pitiable as to see this excellent person making way for some of his solutions, by saying—"That it is not to be *conceived* the "compilers of the canons should set forth any "order, that should clash with an act of par-"liament, and that such and such things were "never disigned by our canonists, because "they are such as could not with any propriety "be made use of." Vide page 216. At the same time he is helping us to *conceive* by a number of instances, of what gross contradictions and improprieties our makers of rubrics and canons *have* been capable.

So much for this work in general, pass we on now to a few particulars, unworthy, in my humble opinion of the candour, probity, and judgment, of so good and so able a man as Dr. S.

In the first of these charges, the Dr. makes a difference "between that kind of clerical "obligation arising from personal consent "and voluntary stipulation and promise, and "that which arises merely from the authority "which prescribes." Page 5. It were to be wished the Dr. had told us in some of these discourses, what he thinks of the declaration or promise of obedience to our bishop, and the oaths of *canonical obedience*, which surely in the cases under his consideration, have respect to the *authority which prescribes*. Dr. *Nichols* informs us from *Lynwood*, that the promise of obedience to the ordinary, in the ordination office, and the oath of canonical obedience at institutions, relate to the canons and constitutions

of the church, which are in force. Bishop *Hoadly* indeed is of another mind, but as one of his antagonists justly observed, *canonical obedience* either meant *obedience according to to the canons*, or meant nothing at all. Vide Calamy's Life of Baxter, chap. x. Here then is a consent to the canons, and a stipulation to observe them, as much *personal* and *voluntary* as any of those to which Mr. Archdeacon ascribes the highest obligations; and in that case, what becomes of this distinction? But to proceed, the reason on which Dr. *Sharp* enforces this superior obligation of the personal stipulation of clergymen is this, that "they are supposed to have satisfied themselves that the "rites and ceremonies to the performance of "which they have tied themselves with so great "solemnity, are not against the word of God, "*before* they enter into such engagements." One would hope this *may be* the case of some, but that it *cannot be* the case of all, and *is not* the case of above one in ten, may be very justly concluded from the nature of the thing, as well as from the knowledge of the men who are thus engaged. With submission therefore, I think it is hardly fair to draw such important consequences from suppositions which are so evidently contrary to the matter of fact. And this is the reason why I should have thought it necessary for the good Dr. to have bestowed *one* discourse at least on the agreement of those stipulations (which are not voluntarily undertaken, as the Dr. is pleased to suppose, but imposed, required, and exacted of us) with our obligations to the gospel of Christ. I cannot find that he has said any thing sufficient to ex-

cuse him from this task, if this *supposition* will not do it; and I believe if he had but cast his eye on the first four or five clergymen which stood next him, when he delivered this part of his charge, he would have found reason to have considered this supposition as a mere chimæra, and consequently to have abated something of the rigour of the obligation.

And in the name of good sense and christian charity, why all this strictness about these personal stipulations? Suppose an honest man should *ex post facto*, and upon farther examination become *unsatisfied*, that our rubrics are *agreeable to the word of God*; would Dr. *Sharpe's* good nature, or his christian charity permit him to lay the stipulator under this severe dilemma, either to conform strictly and literally to his stipulation, or to forfeit his bread? Even *Henry* VIII. rigorous as he was, and particularly in the matter of supremacy, was prevailed with to qualify the oath with a clause importing—*So far as is consistent with the laws of Christ*: "a condition, says bishop *Burnet*, "which is tacitly implied in every covenant "with human powers in a christian country." Will Dr. Sharp say, this condition is not implied in these personal stipulations? If it is, what occasion for this tragedy of *vows at the altar*, &c. (where, by the bye, the promise of canonical obedience is made) which can serve for nothing that I can see, but to raise a suspicion that the conformity stipulated, will not bear an examination by the laws of God, and wants inforcement from another quarter.

"It hath been, we are told, page 6, the wis-"dom of our church to lay us under these en-

" gagements, in order to preserve exact uni-
" formity in public worship, and all the litur-
" gic offices." Some people are of opinion, that the church hath not shewn much wisdom either in attempting the thing itself, *exact uniformity*, or in contriving the means. While men are left to think and judge for themselves, and do not find that any precise modes of christian worship are prescribed in the new testament, it is not likely that any ordinances of man should make them uniform in matters of mere ceremony, unless you can find a set of men who will act like puppets, just as they are managed by the springs and wires of human authority, without bestowing one reflection upon what they are about. Divine worship, whether public or private, should be a free will offering, and where the *mind* is engaged in devotion, small attention will be paid to external circumstances; and *vice versâ*. The history of the act of uniformity, its motives, and its consequences, is one of the most reproachful parts of the history of the church of *England*, and should never be mentioned when we are exhibiting instances of the wisdom of this our mother. As to the means of uniformity, as they are now established, they are far enough from attaining the end, unless *expressing conformity in divers ways* (vide page 204) be the same thing with *exact uniformity*. In direct answer therefore to the Dr's. question, viz. "How far we are at liberty to dispense
" with ourselves on account of the forementi-
" oned engagements?"—I think we are at this liberty, so far as in process of time, and upon maturer deliberation, we find any circumstan-

ces in our conformity disagreeable to the word of God; so far as by not conforming in such cases, no feuds, offences, or scandals, are occasioned in the congregation where we minister; and so far as our superiors do not interpose, whilst they do not interpose, it is presumeable they see no occasion to do it: and the distinction between the authority that prescribes the *stipulation*, and the authority that prescribes the *rule of conformity*, is but a mere scholastic nicety.

Once more, why should the pious and humane Dr. Sharpe, of all men in the kingdom, bind these heavy burthens upon his brethren? I put this question, because if the Dr's. rule of obligation hold good, he seems to me to have *loosened* one of his own stipulations by an ingenious comment upon an article of religion, for which I doubt he has but slender authority. It seems he subscribed to the homilies, as containing "a godly and wholesome doctrine, "necessary for the times *they were written in.*" Where does he find these four last words? not in the xxxvth. article; which says simply *necessary for these times.* Undoubtedly for the times they were written in, and for all subsequent times, while the 39 articles should continue to be subscribed as a test of orthodoxy. If the times when the articles and homilies were compiled, are the *only* times meant and referred to, our subscription to the rest of the articles, must be understood with the same limitation. For instance, the three creeds may be proved by most certain warrants of scripture, says one of the articles. "This might be very

" true, says a subscriber in the *belief* of the " compilers of the article, and as such I sub- " scribe the proposition, and hold myself well " justified by the homily article." I am certain Dr. Sharpe will not approve this way of subscribing to *that* article; no more do I. But then I insist that *his* interpretation is no better justified than *this*. For let it be considered, at what period of time did the doctrine of the homilies become *unnecessary?* Are godly and wholesome doctrines *unnecessary* for *any* times? May we innocently declare that ungodly, or unwholesome or false doctrines, or doctrines which we do not believe ourselves are necessary for *any* times? At that rate a man might subscribe innocently to a system of pagan theology, and even the grossest corruptions of popery, which some very good christians and good protestants that I could name, have held to be necessary *rebus sic stantibus*, for the times wherein they obtained respectively. But I trust, Dr. *Sharpe* is not so persuaded concerning any doctrines built upon the *foundation of the apostles and prophets, and Jesus Christ the chief corner stone;* viz. that they are necessary at *one* time and not necessary at another: and then the result will be, either that Dr. *Sharpe* subscribed every doctrine, argument and assertion in the homily-book, or that in the excepted instances he must avail himself of bishop *Burnet's* tacit condition: in which case we stipulators shall take leave to enter into the church's premises at the same door that he does; which perhaps was more than he intended. But,

As the good Dr. has for reasons of his own,

relaxed *one* stipulation in the preceding case, so hath he straitened *another* even to suffocation, and that, as far as I can see, without any sufficient grounds. In the third charge, page 57, we have this passage:—"Whereas we have "most solemnly promised to give our faithful "diligence to administer the sacraments and "discipline of Christ, NOT ONLY as the Lord "hath commanded, BUT as this realm hath "received the same according to the com-"mandments of God."—Now if you will turn to the ordination office, you will not find the least trace of the disjunctives, *not only* and *but*, which Dr. Sharpe has thought proper to insert, I suppose to support his subsequent reasoning which plainly goes upon the supposition that this realm hath received the sacraments and discipline of Christ, and requires them to be administered in some manner *different*, or at least *distinct* from the commandments of God. Whereas the genuine unadulterated stipulation runs just thus:—"The sacraments and disci-"pline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded, "AND as this church and realm hath received "the same, according to the commandments "of God." Plainly importing that this church and realm have received and require to have administered the christian sacraments and discipline exactly *in the same and in no other* manner, than according to the commandments of God: by which the stipulator is left at liberty (if the church and realm should prove to be mistaken in the matter of fact) to adapt his ministrations to the commandments of God and Christ, and to recede from any human injunctions inconsistent with them. Bishop *Bur-*

net's condition here is not *tacit*, but most plainly expressed. *Without* this condition, a religious stipulation of any kind would be impious: *with* it, no man is more obliged by a rubric than a canon, upon account of any personal stipulation whatever. The good Dr. having laid his foundation upon these precarious principles, it is not to be expected that the superstructure should be without fault. I have not time to set down a variety of passages, to which, in my opinion, just exception may be taken: it will be sufficient to remark two or three.

Charge iv. page 91. e. q. s. The Dr. signifies his opinion, that the bread and wine at the communion, come under the notion of *oblation*, and that they are referred to as such in the prayer for the church militant, explained by a preceding rubric: to support which, there is a long note of argumentation proceeding entirely upon the supposition that the compilers of our service would certainly prescribe or express nothing, but with the greatest liturgical as well as grammatical propriety, which, however, is very little to be depended on. For my part, I think it worth no man's while to account for the *intention* of the compilers of our liturgy and rubrics, which in many places is sufficiently obscure; and least of all, would I lay any stress upon the *intention* of those who *put* any thing in at the *last review*. Probably enough they might think to distress the dissenters the more (a point by no means indifferent to them) by giving this superstitious cast to the word *oblations*. But if this was really their meaning, they forgot two material things. 1. To order a side-table for the elements

(as Archbishop Laud had in *his* chapel) till the priest is ready for the ACTION, prescribed in the rubric: and 2. to reconcile *this* oblation with the parenthesis in the consecration-prayer, *viz.* (by HIS OWN *oblation* of himself ONCE offerred) and with the passage in *Hebrews*, to which these and the following words refer.

Charge ix. 189. "The puritans in the latter end of queen *Elizabeth's*, and the beginning of king *James's* reign, gave no little disturbance to the established church." They who will be at the pains to consult Strype's Life of *Whitgift*, will easily discern that the established church gave the *first* disturbance. Commissions, articles, and injunctions, were sent out to inforce conformity. Against these the puritans remonstrated, as well they might, being many of them arbitrary acts of church tyranny: and this disturbance in process of time, begat the venerable set of canons with which the church is now blessed. Some, if not many of these puritans, particularly *Udal* were as good men as Dr. *Sharpe;* and I need not give them a higher character.

Ibidem, page 100. "And it was very *natural* for the convocation, to drop nothing of that branch of power over preachers, which the ecclesiastical laws had given to the ordinary, as being one of the strongest bulwarks of an established church." The Dr. speaks here of the convocation's acting in this affair, of preaching licences, after some precedents *since* the reformation. But if the reader will step on with him to a curious note at page 201, he will find very respectable precedents for canonical restraints upon preach-

ing *before* the reformation, where the Dr. is ingenuous enough to own that what *is* one of the strongest bulwarks of our established church, *was* likewise one of the strongest bulwarks of popery. I am sorry *our* expedients of support and defence, should be so near akin to *theirs*. *Paul*, however, seems to have entertained an odd notion, as if it was a blessing in his time that *the word of God was not bound*, and he carries it so far as to enjoin the *Thessalonians* to pray that *the word of the Lord might have its free course*. Aye! but in this *freedom*, *Lollards* and *Wickliffites*, and *Quakers*, and *Presbyterians*, and *Methodists*, will preach. Why let them, says *Paul*, if so be *that Christ is preached any way, I therein do rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice.* This whole charge is indeed most unhappily exceptionable, [illegible] is hardly consistent with what the Dr. says, page 197, that the reformed principles (if by this expression are meant the original principles of reformation) are the *only ones* commonly *espoused*. If the age *can bear* such doctrines as these, I shall be for administering one more cathartic to it, upon a presumption that the last operation has not sufficiently *purged off the dregs and remains of popery*. "The beneficed clergy, "says the Dr. who are the only authorized "pastors." Is not this to put the light of the word, under the bushel of a canon? It is a strange comfort, methinks, that some people take in observing that the toleration-act will neither authorize the ministry of a dissenting teacher, nor justify his separation. As much as to say, if we cannot claw the schismatics and sectarists in this world, we hope to see them

peppered in the next; and if those hopes are well grounded, I wonder where *they* will appear who grant these *sectarists* their licences. A little more respect to our temporal governors, than such an insinuation admits of, would not be amiss: who, if they have no proper authority to enact or execute penalties, and censures for non-conformity, I do not know who has: and they are therefore in the right, and are doing nothing but their duty when they tie up the hands of those who claim it by a different title.

Charge xii. I wish I could say I was more edified with *this* discourse, which begins, and in my humble opinion, too soon has done, with what I must needs call the most important duty of catechising. Because there are some particulars in the canons and rubric, which I think want to be explained, and particularly what is meant by catechising in the rubric? All that the Archdeacon thinks fit to inform us of, is that the rubric is our rule, and *(to our comfort)* takes place of the canon which enjoins us to catechise every Sunday and every holiday; whereas the gentler rubric orders only that the curate shall catechise on Sundays and holidays indefinitely, and by the rubric only the ordinary is to censure the neglects of ministers herein; whence I think the consequence is, that if the minister do but catechise two Sundays, and two holidays in the year, the rubrical duty is fully discharged, and the ordinary has no farther business with him on this article. But, as I said, I have some doubt what the rubric means by *examining the children in some part of the catechism.* Does it mean, the

curate shall examine them so as to find out whether they understand that part of the catechism or not? So one would think, because in this way of examination, a part, and a very small part of the catechism might take up a good deal of time; otherwise this rubric might be fulfilled by receiving a single answer to a single question. Or does the rubric mean by examination, that the curate shall only ask the questions, and receive the answers by rote, just as they are set down in the catechism? This likewise is a probable interpretation: for in the next rubric but one, it is said, that when *children of a competent age can say in their mother tongue, the creed, the Lord's prayer, and ten commandments, and can also answer to the other questions in this short catechism, they shall be brought to the bishop;* I suppose, as fit to be confirmed: which also seems to me to be the sense of the sixty-first canon: or if it is not, the canon in this case, as in the other, must give place to the rubric. Be this as it will, I am greatly surprised to see it asserted by this worthy and pious divine, that he knows no means in the world more probable to promote true religion among mankind, than the frequency of confirmations injoined by the 60th canon, and the great care to be used for securing the real benefits of it to our people, injoined by the 61st.—Now the frequency of confirmations injoined by the former, is that they should be triennial, and the care injoined to be taken by the latter, is that when the bishop shall assign any time for confirmation (which may probably be two months before hand) the minister shall use his diligence to

prepare and make able, and likewise procure as many as he can to be then brought, and by the bishop to be confirmed. And in the former part of the canon, the subjects of this rite are then said to be made able when they can render an account of their faith, according to the catechism in the book of Common Prayer. Here the utmost care injoined by the canon, explained by the rubric aforesaid, is that the curate shall for two months, every three years, teach as many children of a competent age for confirmation as he can, to say the church catechism by heart.—I am almost provoked to say, *tantamne rem tam negligenter!* Is this as probable a mean of promoting religion among mankind, as a constant weekly course of instructing of children by such questions and explanations of scripture, as are most suitable to their memories and capacities? Is there one in ten of those who can *repeat* their catechism that *understand* it? Is the case of the 61st. canon in any degree comparable for promoting true religion, as family instruction, of which we have not a canon or a rubric that says a syllable? Believe me when I see so excellent a person as Dr. *Sharpe* under such delusions as these, I am ready to weep for vexation.

But so it is, my good friend, no sooner do the best of men become ritualists, but they must, whether they will or no, tythe mint, annise, and cummin, and omit the weightier matters of the law. Thus you must by all means take care not to omit the surplice, or to read the second service at the *altar* table, and particularly on the north side of it; you must never forget the *action* of placing the elements

on the table immediately before such a prayer; you must never say, *here endeth the gospel* before the Nicene creed, never read two collects for the day but in lent or advent: for these things you have most solemnly promised, and stipulated with the church, and you can by no means dispense with yourself from the performance of them. They are matters of conscience, and are bound upon you by the most solemn ties.

On the other hand, concerning the edifying dispensations of the gospel, which should be free and diffusive as the air we breathe, we have no exhortations but to keep within rule; never catechise out of the liturgic form; never preach, let your talents and capacities be ever so well adapted to the province, without the bishop's licence or a benefice; for in no other case are you an authorised pastor: beware how you associate with any combinations of men, for the reformation of manners, or the propagation of christian knowledge, without a license from the ordinary, and inform yourselves well, whether such license will screen you from the lash of the 73d. canon: it is by no means proper to impeach the government and discipline of the church of England, which is now established; which by the way, old bishop *Leighton* said, was, as to the administration of it, the corruptest he knew of in the christian world: perhaps matters are mended with us since: at least there has been time enough for it.

I forbear to remark upon the Dr's. tenderness in the case of pluralities, non-residence, &c. and his observable expression, page 166,

that *it is trifling to stick upon words and distinctions*, in a case which surely should affect the conscience of a truly faithful and pious minister as much as any Dr. Sharpe has stated, I mean that of *purchasing* a benefice; put what colour you will upon the practice, or put what circumstances you will into any particular case, it is, in my opinion, impossible to reconcile it to the gospel of Christ. The benefice, says father Paul, is the salary for doing the work; but whoever heard of a man's purchasing with his money the price of his honest labour! The benefice, says Dr. *Sharpe*, is the only authority a man has for exercising the pastoral office. To purchase the benefice therefore, is to purchase the *authority* to exercise the pastoral office, which may be reconciled to the gospel terms of vocation, by such as are concerned, and have nothing else to do, if they are able.

Upon the whole, such performances as this with such respectable names at them as Dr. *Sharpe's*, will never do any good to christianity; tending indeed to overthrow it by teaching the vast importance of externals in religion, and the great stress we ought to lay on the traditions and commandments of men.—There is one good use indeed to be made of such treatises, and of this in particular, and which I sincerely pray our superiors may have the grace to make of it—namely, to draw from it fresh arguments for reformation of our present system of ecclesiastical matters, which, in my opinion, the good doctor perhaps without designing it, hath afforded in greater abundance, and with more advantage, than even the authors of the Free and Candid Disquisitions themselves.

I am, dear Sir, your affectionate Servant.

NOTES,

UPON A

PAPER

INTITULED,

"*Some Rules of Caution for the more successful Examination into the Doctrine of the Trinity.*"—*By Dr.* SHARPE.

[FIRST PUBLISHED, M,DCCII.]

NOTES, &c.

WE would be glad to know, *what* doctrine of the Trinity is here proposed as the subject of examination? viz. whether the *scripture* doctrine, or the *church's* doctrine. If the former, we have little to do with the *church's* terms. If the church-doctrine of the Trinity is to be examined, we presume the end of that examination must be to find out, whether the church and the scriptures agree in the doctrine upon this subject, taught by them respectively. In either of these cases, *rules of caution*, such as a zealous friend of the church may suggest, are very likely to be such incumbrances and limitations upon the freedom of *examination*, as may tend rather to make it *unsuccessful*. We therefore take the warning, and shall accordingly be upon our guard.

1. We are told that the church-terms should be understood in that senso only, in which they are used by the church, and in no other sense; and the reason given for this is, that they *are church* terms and *not scripture* terms. So that though these terms may be understood in a sense more agreeable to scripture than that sense which the church puts upon them, yet the examiner is not to understand them in that sounder sense, but in the *church* sense only:

and the case being stated upon the same principles, with respect to Dr. Clarke's terms, the scriptures seem to be excluded from all interposition in this examination, so far at least as the church terms, and Dr. Clarke's terms are concerned. However, it would be some comfort, if we were no more, nor any otherwise bound to the sense of these church terms, than to those of Dr. Clarke, who, I dare say, would have allowed us to put any scriptural sense upon *his* terms. And therefore, why we *ought* to interpret Dr. Clarke's terms in Dr. Clarke's sense, exclusively of all other senses, is a mystery to *me*, who never heard before of any obligation to subscribe to Dr. Clarke's Scripture Doctrine, &c.

2. If I understand this casuist, *unity* is to be understood as standing for *one godhead* only. For *one God*, understood *only* in opposition to idols or false gods, but not in opposition to more than one person so called, is to be understood only of *one godhead;* nor indeed can be understood (as limited by Dr. Sharpe) of *one God*, as distinguished from *one godhead.* Now *godhead* is indeed a scripture word, but a word of which *unity* is no where predicated in scripture. So that the Drs. *unity*, or *one godhead*, is a term, whose sense as given by the church, is not to be found in scripture: and as we apprehend the *one God* of the scriptures is not used in opposition only to every *thing*, but to every *person* that is not by nature divine and *eternal.*—But what does the casuist mean, by what follows? Unity, says he, as used in this subject, is not a scripture term. But all the world knows, that, as it is used in

this subject, it is a metaphysical and a philosophical term; and yet the Dr. tells us, that we must take the notion of *unity* as used in this subject, not from metaphysical definitions, or human reasoning and philosophy, but WHOLLY from the scripture accounts of it. That is to say, we must take our notions from scripture of a thing for which the scripture has not a name! What confusion and inconsistency!—But however, we say that unity *is* a scripture term, and has the same sense of agreement, concord, and communion, where the *oneness* of the Father and Son is spoken of, as it has where the term itself is used in what the Dr. would have us believe is an inferior sense. *That they* (the Apostles) *may be one*, even as we [*the Father and the Son*] *are one*. This *unity* of the *Father* and the *Son* therefore, must either be an *unity* of *agreement, concord, or communion;* or the unity of the apostles must be an *unity of godhead*. And if this unity of the Father and Son is never expressed in any *different* terms in scripture, the Dr. is desired to inform us by what application of his metaphysical distinction, we are to understand the *same* terms in a *different* sense.

3. If the term *substance* applied to the Trinity be a term *transferred to that* subject, it must be transferred *from some other* subject, and consequently cannot be exclusive of all other senses, but that wherein it denotes the *suppositum* in which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and all the divine attributes are united. For then it must be transferred from *nothing*: that is, not *transferred* at all; or, in other

words, must be *substance* in no sense at all. Whence I am afraid it will follow that the same arguments which exclude the idea of *extension* from *substance*, will likewise exclude the idea of substance itself from this subject. And then the church-term *substance* may, and must be as void of authority from scripture, as the term extension. And the result will be, that the church must have a sense and ideas of *substance* of her own, in applying that word to the Trinity, which do not belong to substance, but to something else; no body knows what.

4. When the scriptures speak of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, they always speak of them as distinct, separate beings, which is the ordinary sense of the word person. If the church uses the term person in any other sense, and particularly in a sense which excludes *this* idea of person, all that can be said is, that the church, rather than not talk of what she neither understands herself, nor can make any body else understand, will talk jargon. If she would be understood and believed, she must not send us to Athanasius, but to Jesus and John and Paul.

5. If the proprieties of the connexion between *person* and *substance*, cannot be discovered, how can the connexion itself be discovered? We say the connexion and mutual relation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the proprieties of that connexion are sufficiently discovered in the scriptures, and we have no occasion to seek for farther discoveries; and they who do, will, we apprehend, only set themselves fast. The Dr. takes it for granted, that in the *human* person two different sub-

stances, or two different natures are united. Suppose it should be denied that there are two *different substances* or *natures* in the *compound man*, how would the Dr. prove it? He says it is matter of experience. But another may say, he has no experience of any *difference* of natures or substances in his composition. How would the casuist convince him? No other way I am afraid than by transferring terms from some other subject, and leaving their proper signification behind him. If the *manner* of the connexion of these two different natures is the *only* thing we are ignorant of, with respect to the composition of man, we must then know that there are two different natures or substances in man, and that these two different natures and substances are connected *some* way. But if I certainly know and see by intuition or experience, that two different natures or substances are connected in one subject, I must certainly know and see the manner how, or else how is it possible for me to know or to conceive, either that these substances are *different*, or that they are *connected*? This argument taken from the composition of man, hath long been the palmary sophism, used to stop the mouths of those who complain of the unintelligible explications of the Trinity; and has just as much merit in it, as the logic of the popish priest, who began his argument for transubstantiation, by presupposing Lord Halifax's belief of the Trinity.

6. We do not complain that the doctrine of the Trinity is not made more intelligible in the scriptures. We acknowledge, and are thank-

ful that it is sufficiently intelligible there for our purposes. But we complain, and justly, that the church hath made this doctrine less intelligible than the scriptures leave it.—"Probably says the Dr. had more been told us, "we had been no wiser." How so? "Because we are not capable of understanding "beyond our conceptions." Hence it should seem to be a reasonable deduction, that Almighty God dispensed no more knowledge to man, than his conceptions would admit of. In other words, every thing revealed is intelligible by man. But if any part of the doctrine of the Trinity is *incomprehensible*, as the Dr. after the pseudo Athanasius would have it, it should seem to follow that something is revealed to man, for which man is no wiser. Which, whether it be agreeable to the current account in scripture of God's dispensations of knowledge, we leave the Dr. to consider.—If by *personal characters*, the Dr. means only as I suspect, *personal names*, I must tell him that whatever *he* may do, other people call the Father, Son, and Spirit, persons for a better reason than that, namely, because they have personal *actions* and *offices* ascribed to them, and unless these *actions* and *offices* are only *names*, we say that they must denote *real* and not *nominal* persons. The Dr. adds, "we also learn "that each of these [persons] hath attributes "strictly and properly divine, and incommunicable to creatures." Where the Dr. learns this, any where except in the athanasian creed, I cannot tell: but learn it where he will, if he conclude from it that each of these is properly and truly God; there are others who will con-

clude from that conclusion, that there are three *proper* and *true* Gods: and either that *Paul* is mistaken when he says there is but one God even the Father, or the Dr. must be mistaken in some part of his *deduction.* And indeed, who is it that cannot come at his own *deductions,* if he may have the leave the Dr. has here taken, of compounding his hypothesis of his own peculiar notions, with the principles of his adversary?

7. The difference between the œconomical consideration of the *word incarnate,* and the absolute consideration of the *divine* λογος before the incarnation, the Dr. endeavours to illustrate by an instance which indeed exhibits no difference at all. The exalted character which the *word* had *with the father before the world was,* when *the word in the beginning was God,* as well as with God, may, for any thing that appears besides the Doctor's repeated assertion, suffer no diminution by saying, that the *character* was *derived* from the Father *before* the incarnation, as well as the *power* and *judgment* afterwards. The point to be settled is, whe-

* I could name a writer not inferior to Dr. S. either in fame or real merit, who has said, that the power of knowing mens hearts, was to him, the strongest proof of the divinity of the *Son.* The Dr. will hardly say, that this *attribute* was incommunicable by the *Father,* especially as it was an attribute of the word incarnate; of which he was in possession when he was not *with* God in St. John's meaning; this observation will bear very hard on the Dr's. ingenious distinction between the *absolute* and *œconomical* character of the word:— For if the word incarnate actually had one of the highest attributes of the Deity, during that incarnation, will it not follow that all his powers both before, during, and after his incarnation, are of the *same,* and not of a different consideration? And that the word *œconomical* is no more than a technical term, invented to support a lame and arbitrary hypothesis.

ther St. *John's* words, Και θεος ην ο λογος, are to be understood of the *same* God *with* whom the word was in the beginning, or of a person distinguished from the supreme God: that is to say, whether St. *John* meant that the λογος was with himself or some other? St. *John* himself is supposed to have sufficiently marked the distinction, by adding the article [τον θεον] to distinguish the God *with* whom the λογος was, from the λογος himself; the θεος, who was with the τον θεον. The Dr. knows very well that *Origen* took notice of this distinction, and insisted on it, in very plain terms. And I know very well, that the editors of Origen's works in latin, wrote the word *cave*, or a *rule of caution*, over against this explanation in that edition. But giving *cautions*, or *asserting* different senses, is not answering arguments. The Dr. allows *the word* may be called *God*, on account of the power and judgment conferred on him by the Father; and why may he not be called God, with the same limitation, on account of his exalted character derived from the Father before the incarnation, without any diminution of that character? Because, says the Dr. the λογος and consequently the exalted character was from *eternity*. We should desire to see this proved from scripture in the Dr's. sense of *eternal* or *eternity*. But supposing this proved, what is the Dr's. quarrel with Mr. *Romaine* and his fellows, but that they assert the self-existence of the word, exclusive of *any* generation, *before* the incarnation? And yet does not that *eternity*, which according to the Dr. excludes the *derivation* of the *exalted* character of the λογος from the Father, plainly

imply that very *self* existence? Allow the *exalted character* to be *derived*, though ever so far back before the world, and the power and judgment *given* afterwards, is an *addition* to, not a *diminution* of that character; or if a *diminution*, it is a *diminution* for which the scriptures are to bear the blame; for the Dr. may search the scriptures long enough, before he will find that the word had this *power* and *judgment* absolutely *in*, and *of* himself, whether considered as *incarnate* or *eternal*. We conclude then that this œconomical distinction, is neither more nor less than an ingenious device, invented by Dr. Waterland, to extricate himself out of the difficulties laid upon him, by Dr. Clarke's scripture-doctrine; and we are the rather of this opinion, as we observe no such distinction marked by St. John, where he certainly would have marked it if it had been *real*; namely, in the beginning of his gospel. On the contrary, St. *John* speaks of the word, which *was God*, was with God in the beginning, by whom all things were made—without whom nothing was made—in whom was life—who was in the world—the very world which was made *by* or *through* him—who came a light into the world,—St. *John*, I say, speaks of *this* λογος as one and the *same* λογος, and for any tittle that appears to the contrary, under *one* and the same consideration; *exalting* his *character* just as much when he speaks of him as in the world, as before the world was, as will readily appear to an unprejudiced reader of St. John's discourse.

8. The Dr. hath stated his example of *exclusive terms*, very unfairly and fallaciously,

One God, even the Father, excludes the *Son* from being *God* with *underived* powers, and *one Lord Jesus Christ*, excludes the *Father* from being *Lord* with *derived* powers; and *one Spirit*, excludes both the Father and Son from being Spirits, *so commissioned* and *sent*, as was the one Spirit called the *Comforter*. We have no fear of making the scriptures inconsistent with themselves, by this interpretation, because these exclusions and limitations are marked in the scriptures with the utmost precision, and without any, the least hint that this is done *only* in an œconomical sense. As to the two passages of the same apostle *John*, which the Dr. thinks it necessary to bring the œconomical consideration to reconcile, the case stands plainly thus.—*Thee, the only true God*—John xvii. 3, are the words of Jesus Christ, and, without all doubt, addressed by him to the Father. And the word *only* must in this place be understood, to be not *œconomically* but *absolutely* exclusive of all other Gods; for otherwise there may be true Gods, besides him who is the *only* true God. If therefore this apostle, speaking of the Son, says that he is *the true God* in an *absolute* sense, he most manifestly contradicts what he himself tells us, Jesus Christ taught concerning the true God. But however, it happens that the apostle, 1 John, v, 20, is not speaking of the Son as true God. In the beginning of the verse, the apostle says —*We know that the Son of God is come*, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, ινα γινωσκωμεν τον αληθινον.—Thus far the Son is sufficiently distinguished from him who is to be known (the αληθινος) by

the understanding which the Son hath given us.—The apostle goes on to say—*And we are in him that is true:* the same αληθινος still as it should seem that was spoken of before. Dr. *Sharpe* will say, no; for the following words εν τω υιω αυτου Ιησου Χριστω are put in opposition with τω αληθινω which immediately precede. But if this be so, I am afraid the Son will be *the true God* in his *œconomical* capacity, for whatever is predicated of the Son by name, is according to the Dr's. distinction predicated œconomically. But this is not all, if αληθινω is *not* the antecedent to the word αυτου, in the above cited clause, we desire to know what *is?* And if αληθινω *is* the antecedent to αυτω, it is impossible that τω υιω should be put in opposition with τω αληθινω; and the construction must of necessity be this—*And we are in him that is true, in* [i. e. through] *his Son Jesus Christ.* Here all is plain, consistent, and grammatical; the distinction is kept up from the beginning of the verse to the end of it; and *this true God* appears to be that true God and no other, which the Son came to reveal. And the result of all will be, that St. John in this passage of the epistle, is only teaching and confirming the same doctrine, which he tells us elsewhere, his master taught. Besides, the Dr. cannot be ignorant that St. *John's* words in the 21st. verse, are supposed by some competent judges to denote that St. John's design in this whole epistle, was to assert the honour and dignity of the true God, in opposition to idols and false Gods, in which case, as he so expressly and so often distinguishes the Father from the Son, he must be understood, as St. Paul is to be

understood, of the *one God*, the *one true God the Father*, without taking in any idea of a compounded Godhead; and all those characters of *Divinity* ascribed to the Son, by St. John's peculiarity of expression will amount to no more than a description of that near communion which the Son had with the Father before his incarnation, by which he was qualified εξηγησασθαι τον θεον *John* i. 18. when he came into the world. The Dr. knows likewise, that some very learned men have said, that idols in scripture are always put in opposition to God the Father, and to this, I think the Dr. himself asserts, though with some unwillingness. No. 2.

9. If the peculiarity in the character of the *Father*, cannot be *too highly thought of*, it can hardly be too highly *spoken of*. And to what other sort of *impropriety* of speaking the Dr. refers, one cannot easily tell: for the impropriety of Mr. *Romaine*, specified in the next period, consists in speaking too highly, not of the Father, but of the Son. Mr. *Romaine*, we think, is sufficiently justified by the rules of logic, in infering the self-existence of the Son from that sort of *eternity*, which Dr. Sharpe ascribes to the Son; though he could not by the same rules of logic, be justified in inferring the Son's self-existence, from his existence *before all worlds*: because the scriptures are no where express, as Dr. *Sharpe* most unwarrantably assumes, that *before all worlds*, and *from all eternity*, are equivalent expressions. And as Mr. *Romaine* cannot infer the *self-existence*, so neither can Dr. S. infer the *necessary existence* of the Son, from any expressions truly and properly scriptural. We leave them there-

fore to fight out this battle, as they may with the weapons of the church. But when the Dr. comes to talk with other sort of men, he must be desired to come out of his church-fastnesses, and to tell us plainly and explicitly, what is the difference between *resolving into the paternity, and refering up to it?* He says that they who *resolve into the paternity, what is only to be referred up to it,* lean too much on their own *private sentiments;* which is, as I apprehend, to say that they *think too highly* of the peculiar something in the character of the first person. If there is not an original perfection in the paternity, inconsistent with the communication of it to any other person or persons, the peculiarity in the character of the first person, *may be too highly thought of.* Agreeably to which imputation upon such *leaners* on their own private sentiments, the Dr. asks, "how can they tell that all the perfecti-"ons, &c. of the Deity (paternity only ex-"cepted) were not communicated whole and "entire, so as to be the same in one person, "as in another?" I suppose these gentlemen would answer, because the very exception of the paternity, makes the communication of *all* the perfections of the Deity, *whole* and *entire,* an impossible supposition. He asks again, "how should they be able to know that the "priority, or pre-eminence (conceive of it as "highly as you please) which was necessarily "consequent on the paternal relation, implied "an *absolute supremacy,* an *incommunicable* "*right of dominion,* and *such other things,* as "they would represent to be inconsistent with "filiation and procession?" I imagine the

answer would be, that the priority or pre-eminence ascribed to the paternal relation in the scriptures, do necessarily imply an incommunicable supremacy, &c. unless such priority, pre-eminence, paternal relation, such as they are exhibited in the scriptures, must be supposed to stand for mere sounds without ideas. *Supremacy* is a term which, according to the natural idea of it, is as inconsistent with *communication*, *partition*, &c. as *paternity* itself. And if, *in reason*, *supremacy*, *absolute dominion*, and the godhead, must ever go together, *paternity* must ever go along with them; and if the godhead is communicated, paternity must be upon the Dr's. own principles, be communicated too, and the *ineffable manner* will do just as well for the solution of the communication of the *paternity*, as of the communication of the *supremacy*. When the Dr. says, that "the term *Father* doth not imply these "things, neither do the scriptures say them," he imposes upon himself, as well as his readers. It is not what the term *Father* implies, simply taken, that is the question, but what is implied in the terms, *Father of all*, *who is above all*, which the Dr. knows are expressions, or sayings of scripture upon this very subject. For the rest, we are not at all concerned for the honour of any terms and expressions, merely because they are called catholic. We, therefore, as above-mentioned, willingly leave this part of the controversy to be discussed by the Dr. and those sanguine persons, whom his catholic hypothesis requires him to oppose. Recommending it to the Dr. that while he is proving, *eternal generation*, and

everlasting Son of the Father, not to be contradictions, he would apply some of his own *rules of caution*, to the keeping of his athanasian faith *whole* and *undefiled*.

10. To this section we have little to say, but that the difficulties attending our conceptions of the *eternity*, &c. natural attributes of God, are of quite another nature than those difficulties, which attend the conception of the *communication* of these attributes. *Eternity*, *infinity*, *ubiquity*, are simple ideas, and revelation assists us in the conception of these, by referring to such manifest and incontestible effects of them, as are *not* beyond the reach of our understandings. But the communication of these attributes, to more beings than one, is a complex idea, naturally implying a contradiction towards the conception of which, we have no assistance from revelation. For so far as revelation has been brought in evidence by the church, for the reality of such communication, revelation has, we apprehend, been greatly injured; and many parts of it, which, when viewed by the naked and single eye of common sense, have appeared, and always will appear to us clear and coherent one with another, have, when viewed through the spectacles of the church, appeared obscure and inconsistent, and have been interpreted by such methods, as can only serve to confound all language, and reverse all the natural order and succession of human ideas. We shall therefore pay very little attention to the authority of the church, nor to any general suffrage which is not the genuine and unprejudiced result of searching the scriptures, whether these

things are so. We do not indeed comprehend what this gentleman means by the *general* suffrage of christendom. We know of no suffrage of christendom, which has been *general* upon this subject. This learned man cannot but know, that the disputes have been very hot even of late years, what was the suffrage of christendom before the council of Nice. And the presumption has generally been, that the general suffrage on this head, was greatly against what the Dr. calls the catholic doctrine. The bishop of Clogher, or whoever it was that defended the *Essay on Spirit*, brought a long passage from *Justin Martyr*, which has a very unfavourable aspect towards the catholic doctrine, particularly that of Athanasius.—*Epiphanius*, another ancient father, interprets 1 John v; 20. by refering ουτος εστιν αληθινος θεος, to the Father; Origen's opinion of John i, 1. we have mentioned above, and as Dr. S. must know all this, and much more to the same purpose, we are greatly surprised to find him appealing first to the christians who lived nearest the times of the apostles, and then slurring these upon us, by a sleight of hand, as if they were *the* christians who composed the first general councils, and oppressing us with an authority in the aggregate, which, when it comes to be analyzed, is as incongruous one part of it with another, as the Dr's. system is with that of Dr. Clarke. Surely the Dr. must lose all the merit of his moderation, when it appears that he makes no better use of it, than for a cover to so much disingenuity.

I have left what I have to say of Dr. Clarke to the last, yet I may say it altogether. If

the person to whose consideration these rules of caution are proposed, has adopted Dr. Clarke's system, to the exclusion of all others, or to the exclusion of any interpretation of the scriptures different from Dr. Clarke's, he must be left to the defence of his own hero. If he hath left himself room to dissent from Dr. Clarke, where Dr. Clarke dissents, in *his* judgment, from scripture, the casuist is to blame to press him with Dr. Clarke's hypothesis in the manner he has done.

As to Dr. Clarke himself, the case appears to me to have stood thus. He was a man of a most meek and gentle temper, which is too often attended with some degree of timidity. His lot in life fell among a set of bigotted and furious churchmen, who would, with the utmost self-approbation, have burnt him for an heretic. This he quickly found out, and began to feel some mortifying effects of their malevolence. He had the example of honest, undaunted Whiston before his eyes, whom the same sort of men had deprived of his bread, though perhaps bating his opinions, he was one of the most innocent, as well as the most useful men then living; nay, so it was, that although the province wherein he was most useful, had no sort of influential connexion with his theological opinions, his academical inquisitors could suffer themselves to turn him out to starve in the wide world, with every circumstance of ignominy and cruelty, which it was in their power to inflict, and with more severity indeed than they could justify, either upon the principles of christianity, or the original plan of a protestant establishment; and I

have heard it often said, that had Whiston appealed to the more equitable laws of his country, he might have had a severe amends for the unparalleled injuries he suffered by the arbitrary unprecedented proceedings of his expulsion. In vain did he call upon his persecutors for a fair and impartial examination. That was a method by which, though Whiston probably would not have carried *all* his points, yet their own system would have suffered very considerably, and their business was to support *that* at all events. And being conscious (such of them I mean as knew any thing of the matter) that fair and open debate would never do any credit to their cause, they found the readiest way would be to starve the man who opposed it, and to the utmost of their influence, to render him infamous. This they had in their power, and this they put in practice, leaving it to whom it might concern to reconcile their conduct to the character of christian teachers, and disciples of the meek and merciful Jesus. —Whiston, on his part, superior to every attack of their malicious bigotry, bore the triumphs of their insolence, not only with patience and evenness of temper; but even with uncommon alacrity he pursued his studies, was indefatigable in his labours, and under all the disadvantages of subsisting by charitable benefactions, and of being browbeaten and reviled, by every orthodox dunce of figure, and libelled by every profligate scribbler in the pay or dependance of the church, he found the means to do more real good to the world, even while he lived in it, without any province or any character, than all the whole group of his

persecutors were ever either able or willing to do, with all the solemnities of office, and all the encouragement of titles and stipends from the public about them. He was indeed gifted with a large measure of that christian fortitude, which falls to the share of few men in *any* degree, and to Dr. Clarke in particular, but in a very small proportion.—This example the Dr. had before his eyes, and saw he could not endure the tenth part of what gave Whiston no sort of anxiety. He had carefully counted the cost, and found he could not carry his plan into execution at so much expence.

To exchange his reputation, his subsistence, his station and influence, for the reproof of solemn hypocrisy, the sneers and rancorous reflection of envy, and the hair-brained insults of ignorance and stupidity, was probably what he could not bear to think of. He saw the same pack which had run down poor defenceless Whiston, were equally sharp set upon his destruction. He was too a more considerable sacrifice. Whiston, with great talents, the most benevolent of hearts, and an eager appetite for doing any possible good, and in many cases no bad judgment how to apply his materials to the best purposes, had yet some peculiarities and indiscretions which were pitied among his friends, and even made him ridiculous to some of his well wishers: while Dr. Clarke's very mistakes were such efforts of genius and capacity, as made him the admiration of all Europe, who must have looked upon the fall of such a man by a national spirit of vengeance, to be the effect of something extremely

criminal, since his uncommon and superior merit could not support him against the violence of his enraged countrymen. There is great reason to believe, that considerations of this kind made very deep impressions upon the peaceable spirit of Dr. Clarke; he therefore stopped short, prudently no doubt with respect to his own worldly ease, but very unhappily for those generous and christian minds, who in this generation are labouring and groaning under the yoke of a most oppressive ecclesiastical establishment, bound upon them by the cords of a church-authority, inconsistent with every pretence to christian liberty, and the genuine principles of the protestant religion. The ruin of a *Clarke*, or an *Hoadly*, would indeed have made a most infamous figure in the annals of our country. But could these men have prevailed with themselves to have stood the fiery trial, and to have acted up in all respects to their principles, the worse it had fared with them, the more would the succeeding age have detested the spirit which laid such hardships upon them, and very probably by this time would have put it utterly out of the power of blind headlong orthodoxy, to have done any more mischief of the same sort. As it is, the author of *the Scripture Doctrine* of *the Trinity*, died in the bosom of the church, which he had shewn to be inconsistent with her own principles; and the writer of *the Common Rights of Subjects defended*, is very likely to die a bishop of the first rank in an ecclesiastical establishment, founded upon and supported by those very *Tests*, which he hath demonstrated to be utterly irreconcileable to all religious, civil,

and natural equity. From which conduct, the tenderest conclusion that either friends or enemies can draw, must be, that the points they severally concerned themselves to maintain, were not in their private opinion worth the contending for, at least were not of that value as to justify them to the world for venturing for their sake a single shilling of their emoluments, or a single moment of their temporal repose.

Having premised thus much, we can now with more advantage proceed to account for Dr. Clarke's conduct in the articles objected to by Dr. S.

1. Whether Dr. *Sharpe* hath made a true or a fair representation of the state wherein Dr. *Clarke* left the controversy, I have not leisure to examine. For my part, I cannot but think it highly improbable that Dr. Clarke should *imagine* a sort of beings who were neither Gods nor creatures, or that he should give occasion by his expressions to any man else to imagine it. No man could express himself with more perspicuity and precision than Dr. Clarke, when he thought fit: and if he really dropped his inquiry on this subject at any inconceivable point, Dr. *Sharpe* may now see who and what it was that drove him to it. He did not chuse for the reasons I have given, to pursue his lights, whither he plainly saw they would lead him. We pity his weakness, and have full as much occasion to be sorry for it, as Dr. S. has to rejoice at it. For should the scriptures be fairly examined, and found to contradict Dr. Clarke's sense, or rather his

imaginations above-mentioned, they would probably be found to determine on the side which Dr. S. is by no means disposed to favour.

2. As to metaphysical notions, *iliacos inter muros peccatur et extra:* and when one considers Dr. Waterland's feats this way, such objections come with a very ill grace from those who fight under his banner, as I imagine the learned casuist would be understood to do. But indeed, Dr. Clarke has here a particular advantage over the Waterlandians, since, whatever it was that *tempted him into his peculiar cast of thought about the Trinity*, he did his endeavour to have the doctrine settled, not by metaphysics, but SCRIPTURE. If indeed he shewed any inclination to interpret scripture by his own metaphysics, he is so far not to be commended; though even this is a fault in which Dr. Waterland is as deep as Dr. Clarke. In the mean time, be it observed to the honour of Dr. Clarke, that by bringing out every text he could find relating to this subject, even ever so remotely, he shewed a disposition to have the point thoroughly discussed; and I am much mistaken if a thorough paced Athanasian would not tremble to look at that formidable list of scriptural testimonies, in the arrangement and under the titles Dr. *Clarke* hath exhibited them, even though Dr. *Clarke* had not added a single note, or a single paraphrase, to illustrate one of them. It will be long enough before the followers of Dr. *Waterland* will try to support the church's doctrine of the Trinity by the same method. As to Dr. *Clarke's* metaphysical notions, per-

haps I may disapprove them in some things where the casuist agrees with them, as much as he disapproves them on the subject of the Trinity. So I suspect by the little I have seen of his letters to Mrs. Cockburn. You, my friend, know what opinion I have of his argument *a priori*, his notions of the natural immortality of the soul, &c. and yet I think, I may truly say, that I have read over his *Scripture-doctrine* without perceiving his scripture proofs very much, if at all, affected by his metaphysical notions.

3. The casuist well knows, that what he here calls *rather retracting*, was not allowed by Dr. Clarke to be any *retraction* at all. He must know that Dr. Clarke openly remonstrated against that representation of his meaning, as most highly injurious to him, and a contemptible artifice of those who would have turned the bare preliminaries of a truce, into the tokens of a defeat. Honest *Whiston* says, *Life of Dr.* Clarke, *page 56*, the true point was, *save thyself and us.* And so no doubt the upper house understood it. But the bigots of the lower house would have it a recantation, or a retraction, and one cannot but be sorry that so good and wise a man as Dr. S. should be fond at this time of the day to echo their nonsense. But he has done worse, he has represented the matter here as if his friends *condemned* and *lamented* this step, as a *real retractation.* Whereas Dr. S. might have known, that his friends, who expostulated with him on this part of his conduct, allowed *it was not a real retractation of any thing he had said before*: Whiston, *u. s. page* 58, but condemned

it only because it was *so very like a retractation, and yet was not such.*—This expostulation produced an explanatory paper from Dr. Clarke. To *this* paper Dr. S. should have appealed, had he meant to be ingenuous. *This* paper, he knows, opened the eyes of the lower house, and disappointed their triumphs. They *resolved*, that there was no *recantation* in the case, nor any satisfaction given: and had they not been restrained by the prudence and moderation of the bishops, would, without doubt, have treated him accordingly, that is, as a pestilent heretic. If Dr. S. will subscribe this proposition, *God the Father alone is, and is to be honoured, as being,* ἀναίτιος *and* παναίτιος, *the original of all,* himself without *original,* he will allow Dr. S. to make as much as he can of Dr. Clarke's retractation.

4. As to Dr. *Clarke's* attempts to whiten the negro, that is, to reconcile our church forms to scripture doctrine, we must ascribe it to his frailty, that fear of falling into the hands of his furious and relentless enemies, which drew him into all his inconveniences. The churchmen, however, *should forgive him this wrong*, till they are able to reconcile their forms and the scriptures on their own plan. In the mean time be it observed, that Dr. *Clarke's* error will probably be esteemed by honest men and competent judges, of a less malignant nature and tendency, than that of the churchmen. Dr. *Clarke*, left the scriptures to speak their own natural unstrained sense, and only endeavoured to wrest the human, fallible sense of church forms, to a coincidence with them. The orthodox are commonly observed, to keep

strictly to the natural sense of the forms, and to wrest the scriptures to favour and abet them. Upon the whole, Dr. S's casting things in Dr. C's teeth, seems to me, to be like the conduct of those inquisitors, who first put the heretic upon the rack, and then burn him for those incautious, perhaps, false confessions, which he made to deliver himself from the torment of it.

P. S. *Whiston* tells us, *Life* of Clarke, p. 55, that "the Dr. constantly, and vigorously "maintained a metaphysic opinion, that any "creature, whatsoever, might possibly have "been co-eternal with its creator." The opinion may be an absurd one, but, it plainly shews, what the Dr. thought of the Son and Holy Spirit, and, that Dr. S. misrepresents him when he says, that "according to his scheme, "the Son and Spirit were neither properly, nor "by nature Gods, neither where they crea-"tures." As to the other passage, which the Dr. desires you to make sense if you can, I suppose, Dr. Clarke meant no more nor less, than that the Son, existed before all *time*, as time is measured, and distinguished by the phenomena in the material creation, but not strictly, and properly from eternity. And, I believe it would puzzle Dr. S. sufficiently to find a better sense for the words, *in the beginning*, and such other expressions as denote the priority of the Son to the worlds.

FINIS.

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